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NORTHERN TERRITORY PIDGINS
AND THE ORIGIN OF KRIOL

by

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PREFACE

The rise of creole languages in Australia has been a neglected field of study until very recently. This may be due in part to the huge variety and complexity of languages in Australia and the Pacific with which the researcher is presented. I suspect, however, that it may also be due to the lingering doubts, still being expressed, about the legitimacy and status of this kind of language. Fortunately, this is changing. In many parts of the world, linguists are now playing an important role in the growing national or communal consciousness of creole-speaking people. Furthermore, linguists are also discovering that studying the nature of pidgin and creole languages uncovers important perspectives on the phenomenon of language itself.

Research into pidgins and creoles in Australia has lagged behind much of the rest of the world, but that is now being redressed. I count it a privilege to belong to that small but growing group of people who are engaged in the study of these languages in Australia. Not only are we rapidly making up lost ground, but we are discovering that we have a distinct contribution to make to the whole field of pidgin and creole studies.

It will be obvious to anyone who reads it, that this study is based on a Ph.D. thesis. Originally entitled *Language contact, Pidgins and the rise of Kriol in the Northern Territory: historical and theoretical perspectives*, it was submitted to the University of Queensland in 1984. I have undertaken some minor revision and added an index for publication but the style is still very much that of a thesis — every possible piece of data is included, every relevant source acknowledged and every argument developed in detail. I hope that these are its strengths and not its weaknesses. A Ph.D. thesis provides that rare, perhaps once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be painstaking and encyclopaedic without the usual constraints of space and time. For this reason, I am very grateful to *Pacific Linguistics* for their willingness to publish it without amendment.

When I began this research, I enthusiastically proposed a thesis title encompassing the past, present, and future of Kriol. I soon discovered that in one thesis I would be hard pressed to deal adequately with the past, let alone the present and the future (others are doing that, particularly John Sandefur). The study contains, therefore, a great deal of historical information. Some of it is published here for the first time; none of it has been arranged before in this manner nor for this purpose. There is also as exhaustive as possible a collection of pidgin speech recorded prior to 1910, the date by which Kriol had begun to emerge. These data, together with the detailed historical narrative, provide the basis for consideration of the historical, social and linguistic factors in the genesis of this new language.

I first began thinking seriously about Kriol in 1968, although it wasn't called Kriol then. In a very real sense, this study has been eighteen years in the making. I am immensely grateful to all those who have helped me with information, advice, encouragement, constructive criticism and insightful discussion along the way. In particular, I am grateful to my mentor, Bruce Rigsby and my colleague John Sandefur. I am also grateful to Cecil Brown, Peter Carroll, David Coote, Tom Dutton, Lys Ford, Dinah Garadji, Michael Gumbuli, Stephen Harris, Joy Harris, Anne Harrison, Jambana Lalara, Peter Mühlhäusler, Tony Nichols, Sue Parker, Sue Plavins, Alan Powell, Pigeon Rankin, Bruce Sommer, Peter Spillett, Barbara Walden, Michael Walsh, Betty Watts, Murabuda Wurramarrba, and countless other people who I know will forgive me for not listing them. In preparing the manuscript for publication, Lin Ramsey and Anne Rees of *Pacific Linguistics* have made the task so much easier and so much more pleasant than it might have been, putting up with my many questions and changes. Finally, I owe most of all to my wife, Judy, who by caring about me as well as about my ideas, has contributed more than words can say.

John Harris

Darwin, January, 1986

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in references to Archival, Newspaper and certain other sources:

AA	Australian Archives
HRA	Historical Records of Australia
NTA	Northern Territory Branch, Australian Archives
NTT	<i>The Northern Territory Times</i>
NTTG	<i>The Northern Territory Times and Gazette</i>
SAA	South Australian Archives
SAPD	South Australian Parliamentary Debates
SAPP	South Australian Parliamentary Papers
SAR	<i>The South Australian Register</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The antiquity of Aboriginal languages

The rise of an English-based creole in Australia's Northern Territory is one of the latest of many significant linguistic events which have occurred in this linguistically complex region. The north coast of Australia, due to its unique geographical location, has for many centuries been visited by seafaring people from different parts of the world. These visitors made contacts of varying duration and intensity with the Aboriginal speech communities of the region. The more prolonged contacts prompted substantial linguistic changes.

The most important recent developments have occurred as a consequence of European settlement. For well over a century, many Aboriginal speech communities of the Northern Territory have been in constant contact with the English language. From this linguistic contact, English-based pidgins emerged initially as separate contact languages and later as widespread *lingue franche*. In a later phase, they creolised in some places to become the first or main language of several Aboriginal speech communities. This new language is now generally referred to in the Northern Territory as Kriol. Its appearance is one of the world's most recent examples of what is a very important and interesting linguistic phenomenon – the emergence of a new language, an event which has occurred countless times in human history in general and in Australia in particular.

Modern research reveals that human life in Australia is quite ancient, some of the more moderate and careful calculations of human occupation, such as those of Kirk and Thorne (1976:2), being 30,000 to 40,000 years, while Jones and Bowler (1980:12) consider 40,000 years to be a reasonable conservative estimate.

... the key criteria by which we judge the emergence of modern human cultures – complex technology, art, religion and vanity – are now as old in Australia as they have been previously shown to be in Western Europe. This is not to assert any kind of regional chauvinism, but rather to remind ourselves that both the peninsulas, on opposite edges of Asiatic continent, were reverberating to the same fundamental cultural advances being made in the time period 50,000 to 30,000 years ago (Jones 1977:4).

Some recent studies suggest the possibility that the human occupation of Australia may be even more ancient. The date of 92,000 B.P. for a South Australian site obtained by Von der Borch and others (1980) has led Tindale (1982:108) to speculate upon 'the possibility that man was already established in southern Australia by that time and that his arrival could have been at a time closer to 100,000 years ago than had previously been suspected'. Even if these remarkably early dates are definitely proven, it must be kept in mind that these are arrival dates — that is, dates when the ancestors of modern Australian Aboriginal people crossed the sea barriers to populate the continent. Modern scholarship rejects totally the view, once widely held, that Aboriginal people evolved entirely from Neanderthal forms within Australia (Kirk and Thorne 1976:1). Proponents of this view such as Basedow (1925), arguing from inadequate geological premises, believed that huge earth movements isolated the ancestors of the Aborigines in Australia at an early stage of human evolution and that they therefore represent a preserved, early, 'Stone-Age' stage of human development through which modern Europeans passed long ago (e.g. Basedow 1925:58). Recent studies have shown that until sea-level changes no more than 10,000 years ago, Australia was in fact connected from time to time with New Guinea and accessible from the north (Jennings 1971:10), so that the ancestors of modern Australian Aboriginal people must be sought from outside Australia (Urry 1978:164).

These dates of human occupation are established by the application of radiocarbon dating methods to human skeletal remains, to the evidence of human presence including charcoal and the associated bones, shells and other remains of food animals, and to dateable organic materials judged to be contemporary with artifacts such as stone tools. Unfortunately, such direct evidence of ancient language will never be available, yet language competence continues to rival tool-making competence as the human attribute which is most frequently adduced as an essential defining characteristic of the genus *Homo* (e.g. Linton 1936:80; Kluckhohn 1949:145; Critchley 1960:293; M. Harris 1975:116; Leakey 1981:20). Indeed, Aitchison (1977) termed humans 'articulate mammals' and Fry (1977) coined the term *Homo loquens*. People have been communicating by means of spoken, 'syntactic' language (Bourguignon 1979:29) for as long as human kind has existed. The problem, therefore, of communication between people whose languages differ must be almost equally as ancient. Languages would have begun to diversify as soon as groups of people became sufficiently isolated geographically and socially to undergo separate linguistic development.

This, however, is purely speculative, and hard evidence on such problems is limited to the relatively brief era of written and oral history. The only linguistic fossils and monuments we can ever hope to have are the reconstructed proto-languages, such as proto-Indo-European and the earliest records of written languages, of which even the most ancient are no more than 4,000 or 5,000 years old (Robins 1976:643). Some of these old writings contain traditions which deal with language problems with which humankind has perpetually had to cope, the fact that people in different speech communities spoke different languages, the fact that these languages were frequently mutually unintelligible and the fact that such language differences could be divisive. With respect to Australian languages, there are no written records but there is, nevertheless, the possibility of reconstructing proto-Australian. Dixon has recently discussed the dates of human occupation of Australia from the perspective of a linguist.

Archaeological work shows that man has been in Australia for over 30,000 years (indeed a figure of 80,000 years has recently been put forward); it also indicates that the wild Australian dog, the dingo, was brought into the continent perhaps only about 4,000 years ago, suggesting that there must have been at least two waves of invasion before the Europeans. We have no way of telling whether proto-Australian was spoken 30,000 years or longer ago, or much more recently than that. There are many possibilities — proto-Australian could have been spoken by the dingo-bearing people four millennia ago, and it could have spread and displaced the languages then spoken in the continent ... Although we shall probably never be able to offer any proof, it is likely that proto-Australian was spoken a considerable time ago; probably some time before proto-Indo-European, which is dated at around 3,000 B.C. In tracing the history of the Australian language family we have to bear in mind that climatic conditions have changed markedly over the past 30,000 years; the distribution of water and of edible animals and plants has altered considerably, in ways that geographers are just beginning to understand. Remember too that ten or twelve thousand years ago it was possible to walk from Australia to Tasmania, and also to New Guinea. (Dixon 1980:19)

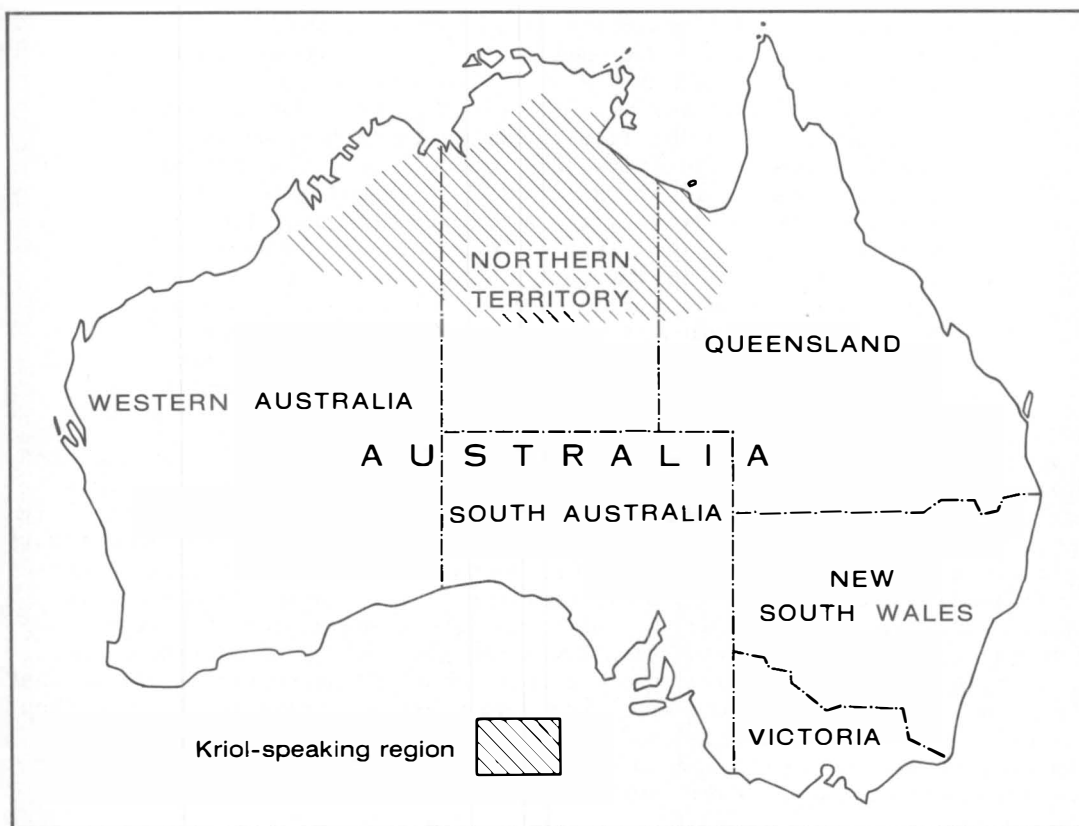
Aboriginal culture and language have not, therefore, been as totally isolated from the rest of the world as is frequently presumed. In coastal Northern Territory, human occupation appears to be relatively recent by comparison with the southern parts of the continent. The oldest evidence thus far reported is dated at approximately 23,000 years B.P. (Jones and Bowler 1980:15). Since then, however, not only was it still possible to walk to and from Australia 10,000 years ago or less, but the relatively short sea journey to Australia from the islands to the north has allowed the possibility of contact by sea.¹ In fact, Aboriginal legends around the north coast preserve the tradition that their ancestors came from the sea. Who were these sea travellers? Were they Dixon's dingo-bringing people of 4,000 years ago? Archaeology, historical linguistics and Aboriginal legend may be combined in various ways to suggest answers, but they may forever remain in the realm of speculation.

What is known, however, is that in relatively recent times, the speech communities of the Top End of the Northern Territory have had to adjust to prolonged contact with foreign visitors and to develop strategies for making verbal communication possible. The latest of these foreign groups were invaders rather than visitors. The rise of English-based pidgins was the initial linguistic adjustment to the European presence. In some parts of the Northern Territory, European presence was devastating to the degree that rapid social change resulted in language loss and the creolisation of the pidgin.

Kriol in the Northern Territory

The English-based creole, now known as Kriol, is spoken in the northern parts of Australia in a wide band extending from western Queensland, across the Barkly Tablelands and Roper River basin, throughout much of the top half of the

Northern Territory and into the Kimberleys of Western Australia (J. and J. Sandefur 1979b; Sandefur 1980). The region is shown in Map 1. Within this region, Kriol is a significant language in over one hundred Aboriginal communities, in which it is spoken by over 20,000 people, at least 10,000 of whom speak it as their primary language. In most of these communities, it is spoken as a mother tongue by two generations, in some communities by four generations (Harris and Sandefur 1983, 1984).



Map 1: Australia, showing the region in which Kriol is spoken.²

Kriol arose by the creolisation of an English-based pidgin. It will be demonstrated in this study that a number of variant English-based pidgins arose in the Top End of the Northern Territory during the nineteenth century, merging by the end of that century into a widely understood language of communication between Aboriginal and European people. For reasons which will be analysed in depth, the creolisation of that pidgin first occurred at the Roper River Mission (now Ngukurr) sometime not long after 1908. The creole became the first language of the younger generation and was in use as a creole at Ngukurr long before it became the first language of other communities. Indeed, Kriol was for many years generally referred to as 'Roper pidgin'.

Creolisation occurred later in other areas, although it is also true that there was a sense in which some elements of the creole were simply adopted because a

new factor for these later-creolising groups was that the Ngukurr creole was already spoken as a second language throughout the whole speech community. Increased contact between groups led to the beginnings of standardisation in the sense of levelling out differences and developing new norms.

Over the years which followed, movement of Aboriginal people along traditional lines together with movement in the cattle and other industries, led to a standardisation of creoles which were not dissimilar to start with. This is not to say that there is no variation. Ngukurr, Bamyili and the Kimberleys, for example, have clearly recognisable regional dialects but they are sufficiently mutually comprehensible to all to be unarguably Kriol (Harris and Sandefur 1984:17).

In the years before serious attention was given to creoles in general and Kriol in particular, such languages were usually dismissed as marginal, inadequate and improper (e.g. Jespersen 1922:225). Referring to pidgins and creoles in Australia, Turner (1966:202) called them 'a collection of disjointed elements of corrupt English and native words'; Wurm (1963:4) said they were a 'broken jargon of corrupt English'; Strehlow (1947:xix) called them 'English perverted and mangled ... ridiculous gibberish ... childish babbling'; Baker (1966:316) referred to Kriol as 'lingual bastardisation'. More recently, however, Kriol has been studied objectively (Sharpe and Sandefur 1976; Steffenson 1977; Sandefur 1979; Hudson 1981). An ever increasing number of people are now perceiving that Kriol is a creole in the tradition of all the great world creoles. In this sense, the perceived status of Kriol has benefited from the increased interest in pidgins and creoles world-wide and the central position they are beginning to assume in linguistics (O'Donnell and Todd 1980:43).

Of course, unlike the linguists and others who have argued about Kriol, those who speak it as their first language have always known it to be just that — their first language — even though, on occasion, they have felt obliged to disown it in the presence of those who would denigrate them for using it (Sandefur 1981a:254). That sense of shame is now diminishing, particularly in the younger generations. The following statement by Ralph Dingul³ about his language not only makes this point very forcefully but also serves to demonstrate, incidentally, how distinct Kriol is from English.

La Ngukurr melabat garrim eitbala langgus. Wen naja traib wandim tok la dis traib, jei tok mijalb garrim Kriol. Jad impotan langgus im Kriol. Olabat gan sabi bla wanim olabat toktok. Sambala pipul la Ngukurr sabi tok munanga langgus Olabat bin tok munanga langgus wen jei bin la priskul raidap la greid siks. Lagijat no olabat bin le:n bla tok munanga langgus.

At Ngukurr we have eight languages. When another tribe wants to talk to this tribe they talk to one another using Kriol. The important language is Kriol. They can understand what they are talking about. Some people at Ngukurr speak the European language (i.e. English). They have been speaking it from pre-school through to grade six. This is how they learned to speak the European language.

The English derivation of many of these words is obvious, e.g. *langgus* is derived from *language*, *impotan* from *important* and *priskul* from *pre-school*. The English derivation of some of the other words is less obvious, e.g. *garrim* is derived from *got* plus a transitive marker *-im* possibly derived from *him*, while *melabat* is derived from *me* plus *all about*. A few words are derived from the Aboriginal languages such as the term *munanga* for *European*, and the preposition *la*, although it is also possible that *la* is related to English *long*. Whereas a phrase like *wen naja traib wandim tok la dis traib* (*when another tribe wants to talk to this tribe*) may appear superficially comprehensible to an English speaker, a phrase such as *jei tok mijalb garrim Kriol* (*they talk to one another using Kriol*) is not mutually comprehensible with English at all.

The nature and scope of this study

It is intended that this study should address some of the debates which surround the origin, nature and use of Kriol. In particular, one of the most crucial questions to be answered, if not the most crucial, is the question of its origin, a matter which is of much more than mere esoteric interest. The question is particularly important when the opinion is advanced that Kriol is not a full language because its history is said to be such that it lacks a sufficient connection with the culture of its speakers.

The main forum for the debate in the Northern Territory on the legitimacy and status of Kriol has been in the field of educational policy determination. More than in any other field, decision-makers in education are de facto language engineers. In 1975, for example, the school at Bamyili, a community where Kriol is a major language, was permitted to introduce Kriol as a language of instruction in the pre-school. In 1979, support for the formal introduction of a full bilingual program was sought from the Northern Territory Education Department. The use of the term 'language' in reference to Kriol was questioned by one senior administrator who doubted the validity and even the sanity of a Kriol language program. Departmental linguists answered by comparing Kriol to other creoles such as Jamaican Creole and by referring to their own recent researches at Bamyili (now Barunga). In response, it was intimated that support for the program came only from linguists with vested interests in promoting the use of Kriol. It was claimed, furthermore, that there was a great deal of difference between Jamaican Creole and Bamyili Creole, the former having developed a richness of expression over a long period of association with Jamaican history and culture. The use of Kriol in schools, it was argued, was merely an experimental intervention and innovation rather than extending the use of a fully-fledged language.

Since 1979, some concessions have been made. Three Kriol-speaking communities have been recognised — Barunga (previously Bamyili), Ngukurr and Beswick Station (S. Harris 1982:45), — although this does not imply that the status of Kriol as a full language and particularly as a language of instruction in those schools, is necessarily accepted by top level educational policy makers. Rather, as Harris and Sandefur (1983:261, 1984:25) point out, most of the recognition that Kriol has received has come from the grass-roots level in the face of opposition from the top levels. At the time of writing (late 1983), the program at Barunga school, which is where the major educational

developments have taken place, is still an experimental program. It is currently being evaluated and if it passes the appraisal of the Department of Education, Barunga will become an 'accredited bilingual school'.

The debate, however, is still very much alive. The problem is not so much that people hold views which are 'right' or 'wrong' but that at the present state of knowledge the limited research literature inadequately informs the discussion. As the contrary viewpoints expressed in the debate clearly demonstrate, in the absence of adequate research, it is only to be expected that policy-makers should question the nature of Kriol as a language, its origin and its usage. Sandefur has been assiduously researching the nature and function of Kriol in the Northern Territory and a small but significant body of literature is gradually being built up (Sharpe 1974; Sharpe and Sandefur 1976; Sandefur 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1983; J. and J. Sandefur 1979; Sandefur and Harris, in press; Harris and Sandefur, in press).⁴ Sandefur's definitive work (1984b) on the function and present status of Kriol is also now completed.

No substantial research, however has yet been undertaken on the origin of Kriol. As Mühlhäusler (1983a:28) has recently commented, research on creoles in the Pacific region of the world is less advanced than it is in the Atlantic regions. In fact, Thomason (1980:168) argues that the concentration of the literature on the Caribbean pidgins and creoles and their specific connection with the slave trade, has resulted in a distortion of the historical perspective on pidgins and creoles in general. In the Pacific region, the dearth of information in the literature is particularly evident in the field of historical/comparative studies which lag behind descriptive studies. Many writers who mention Kriol or English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory say nothing of their origins or make the sweeping generalisation that they originated entirely in the cattle industry or that they were derived, like Torres Strait Creole,⁵ from Melanesian Pidgin English (e.g. Dixon 1980:73). Sandefur, however, knowing the origins to be much more complex, avoids such generalisations and he acknowledges some of the important issues in the development of Kriol, such as the continuity of the pidgin from which Kriol was derived with late 18th century pidgins in south eastern Australia (1981c:3) and the relationship between the attempted extermination of Aboriginal people and the creolisation of the pidgin (1979:13). These significant but thus far unconnected historical facts serve to highlight the need for careful historical and sociolinguistic research into the origins of Kriol so that the debate which surrounds it can be adequately and authoritatively informed.

A second, related debate concerns the place of Kriol and, more particularly, the place of the English-based pidgins from which Kriol was derived, in the broader interrelated history of the English-based pidgins of the Pacific region. This debate is perhaps of less immediate significance to the present-day dilemma in the Northern Territory, but it is an important issue in scholarly research into the linguistic history of the Pacific region. As Ross Clark (1979:3) points out, English-based pidgins and creoles have been used in the South Pacific for nearly 200 years. The study of at least one of these languages goes back 100 years (Schuchardt 1883; 1889) and two of them, Tok Pisin and Hawaiian English, are among the best known and most closely studied pidgins in the world. As noted earlier (Mühlhäusler 1983a:28), historical studies lag behind linguistic description in the Pacific. There are some valuable histories of particular languages⁶ but, as Clark points out, the overall picture of the origins and relations of the various traditions remains but vaguely known.

A set of plausible conjectures, based mainly on the pioneering work of Schuchardt, Churchill (1911) and Reinecke (1937), has been passed from writer to writer, with occasional folkloric embellishments, so often that it has come to be thought of as established fact. The three authors mentioned, however, had little or no linguistic data from before 1880, and scarcely even adequate descriptions of the pidgins spoken by their contemporaries. Their conclusions are thus in need of further investigation rather than mere repetition (Clark 1979:3).

Clark's own work (1977, 1979, 1983) and Mühlhäusler's recent researches (1983a, 1984) are valuable contributions such that the level of ignorance is not as great as it was a few years ago. There is still, however, a great deal to be done although the sources of information are both obscure and limited, with the result that many questions may remain unanswerable. Of all the major pidgins of the Pacific region, the Australian pidgins are the least researched. This situation is becoming rectified in Queensland, particularly by Dutton (1983) but those of the Northern Territory have hardly been studied at all. Clark (1979) has made an excellent attempt to organise the various pidgins and creoles of the Pacific region in historical perspective. Very few resources were available for Clark to utilise. Given the recency of interest in Kriol, there were significantly fewer studies before 1979 than there are now. Clark was therefore obliged to adopt Sharpe's (1974) suggestion, accepting rather uncritically the idea that Kriol was connected to the Melanesian pidgin Englishes. Clark thus had little alternative but to fall into the error he had already noted in the writings of others by accepting 'the plausible conjectures' of earlier writers (1979:3).

There is therefore an urgent need to research and make available what can still be discovered about English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory from the time of the first British settlements.

It is intended therefore that by researching the origin of Northern Territory Kriol and of its pidgin English antecedents, this study will make a contribution to the two areas of debate outlined above, namely the question of the historical validity of Kriol as a language in its own right and the place of Kriol and its antecedents in the linguistic history of the Pacific region. It is also intended that this study of the history of a creole language will add another body of information to the existing studies of such languages, from which data theories of the origins of pidgins and creoles are developed and refined.

Consequently, the origin of Kriol will be examined both in a theoretical sociolinguistic context and in an historical context. The first section will therefore examine in detail theories of the pidginisation and creolisation of languages. The second section will provide the sociolinguistic background and pre-European language-contact history of the region. The third section will describe the historical circumstances under which Kriol and its pidgin antecedents developed, beginning with the earliest usage of English through to the emergence of a stable and widespread pidgin English and its subsequent creolisation. The fourth section will enable discussion of the earlier theoretical and historical sections so that conclusions can be drawn regarding the nature and origin of pidgins and creoles in general and the nature and origin of Kriol in particular.

SECTION I

THEORETICAL ISSUES

This Section deals with theoretical linguistic and sociolinguistic issues in the field of pidgins and creoles generally.

CHAPTER 2: MODELS OF PIDGIN GENESIS (page 11)

CHAPTER 3: CREOLES AND CREOLISATION (page 46)

CHAPTER 2

MODELS OF PIDGIN GENESIS

In researching the full history of Kriol, it is not possible to study the origin of the actual creolised language as spoken today without first examining the origin of the English-based pidgin from which it was derived. In order that the history of this pidgin may be understood from a sociolinguistic perspective, it is important to survey the now voluminous body of literature which sets out the theories of pidgin genesis and the linguistic and social circumstances which are said to result in the pidginisation of a language.

Definition of terms

It is useful to define first some of the more frequently encountered terms used to describe languages which emerge in or derive from language contact situations. These terms, which include pidgin, creole, jargon, Koine, interlanguage, and lingua franca, are used with varying degrees of precision, thus making it necessary initially to attempt their definition. Definitional controversy has long characterised pidgin and creole studies and continues to arise even in the most recent theoretical discussions (e.g. Givón 1979:3; Alleyne 1980:2; Washabaugh 1981:85-86; Tinelli 1981:1; Berdan 1981:47; Cooper 1981:39; Traugott 1981:1; Woolford 1983:8; Todd 1984:1). As Todd (1974:1) points out, the idea that concise, universally acceptable definitions of pidgins and creoles can be devised may well be a myth. It is, nevertheless, a useful myth in that it enables discussion of what linguists are increasingly recognising as distinct phenomena, the pidginisation and creolisation of languages. Indeed, the fact that the words 'pidgin' and 'creole' can be used at all in scholarly discourse is, in itself, evidence that there is some kind of general consensus as to what the words mean — that they do in fact label something which can be shown to exist (DeCamp 1977:3; Alleyne 1980:2). The definitions provided below will therefore enable discussion by indicating, at least in a general way, the meaning of those terms most frequently encountered in the literature. It is recognised, however, that this study will expand and refine these definitions, particularly with respect to the terms 'pidgin' and 'creole'.

a) A *lingua franca*, by historical analogy with the original *Lingua Franca* of the Mediterranean, is any language which functions, in a particular region, as a means of communication between two or more groups of people who do not share a common first language. A pidgin can be a *lingua franca*, as can an 'international' language such as English or French or an artificial language such as Esperanto.

b) A *Koine* is a simplified version of a language, the prototype example being Koine Greek. A *Koine* continues to be mutually intelligible with the language from which it was derived (Nida and Fehderau 1970:154).

c) A *jargon* is an essentially individual response to communication in a language contact situation. Silverstein (1972b) argued, for example, with respect to the Chinook jargon, that both traders and Indians agreed on the meaning of certain lexical items but beyond that, everyone spoke their own jargon.⁷ Virtually grammarless, jargons are an unordered inventory of lexical items rather than a grammatical system (Mühlhäusler 1980:42). The individual grammars were all different and people were not under the delusion that they were speaking the language of the other party. In modern times, jargons have arisen during short-term military occupations e.g. the Thai-English jargon in the 1970s.

d) An *interlanguage* is the language of a second language learner. It is an essentially individual response, what Schumann (1974:146) calls an 'approximative system' or 'idiosyncratic dialect' because, as Selinker (1972:214) defines interlanguage, it is the language which results from a non-native speaker's attempt to produce a target language norm. One of the best known examples is the so-called *cocoliche* or Italianised Spanish of Argentina (Hymes 1971:68). As Whinnom (1971:96-102) points out, *cocoliche* is an unstable state with a wide spectrum of language mix on a changing continuum from the first language (Italian) to the target language (Spanish).

e) A *pidgin*⁸ is a contact language used for restricted communication needs between people who do not speak each other's native languages (Hall 1966:xii; DeCamp 1971:15; Todd 1974:1). It has usually been said that a pidgin is not the native language of any of its speakers (Hall 1966:xii; D. Taylor 1977:151). Pidgins have been inadequately described as mixed languages or as languages constructed from the lexicon of one language and the grammar of another. Although this is far too simplistic a view, it is nevertheless true that the lexicon of a pidgin is characteristically derived, to a very large extent, from one language which is said to be the language which has been pidginised, being variously labelled in the literature with terms such as the model language, the target language, the base language and the lexical source language. Perhaps the most frequently used term is the *superstrate* language, the other languages involved being termed *substrate* or underlying languages. Pidgins are normally named according to the superstrate language from which their lexicon is largely drawn, such as Pidgin English, Pidgin French or Pidgin Arabic. Linguistically, pidgins are said to be simplified or reduced languages – that is, by reference to the superstrate and substrate from which they are derived, pidgins are said to have limited vocabularies and reduced or simplified grammars with the elimination of many redundant features (Hymes 1971:15). Unlike a jargon, however, a pidgin has and obeys its own grammatical rules, i.e. it has been conventionalised.

f) A *creole* arises when a pidgin becomes the primary language of a speech community (Jespersen 1922:234; Bloomfield 1933:474; Hall 1966:xii; Wurm

1971:999; Todd 1974:3). In order to fulfil this purpose, a pidgin undergoes functional expansion necessitating formal expansion of both lexicon and syntax, a process normally termed 'creolisation'. As creoles are not technically contact languages, detailed treatment of creoles and creolisation will be deferred until later chapters.

Responses to languages in contact

A pidgin is, first and foremost, a contact language, a special language which may arise when people whose languages are mutually unintelligible come into contact with each other — what Ferraz (1983:120) calls 'an emergency language that evolves rapidly to make communication possible among people of diverse tongues'. Languages in contact do not, however, automatically result in the formation of a pidgin. As Bickerton (1977:51) points out, people in such circumstances do the best they can with whatever raw materials they have. Depending upon what these raw materials are and upon extra-linguistic factors in the contact situation itself, there are a number of possible responses.

Bilingualism, for example, is the norm in many speech communities of the world. People simply learn and know each other's language. This response to language difference is observable in such disparate environments as the border regions of many adjacent European countries, in French Canadian provinces and in multilingual communities in Aboriginal Australia. In situations such as these, contact between the various groups is intensive and permanent so that the learning of each other's language becomes a worthwhile activity (Mühlhäusler 1974:30). Sometimes only one of the groups is bilingual. This is simply the quite common situation in which the members of a particular group speak both their own language and a second language, being the language of the people with whom they are in contact. On the other hand, social factors may prevent one or other group from normal second language learning. It is typical of such situations that communication is more important to the members of one of the groups so that they are obliged to learn the language of the other. Brandl and Walsh (1982:74) note that frequently the socially less important people speak the most languages as a matter of need and survival. Wolff (1964) describes a typical example from Nigeria.

Abuan is a language spoken in the town and surrounding countryside of Abua on the mainland portion of the eastern Niger Delta ... Outside the town of Abua there is a small settlement of Degema speakers, engaged in fishing in the creek, an activity in which the yam-growing Abuans are not interested ... since the Degema sell some of their fish in the Abua market, there is some linguistic communication. It is entirely in Abuan. Learning Abuan is simply the price the Degema pay in return for being permitted residence and economic activity in the area (Wolff 1964:443).

It is not necessary to propose that the Degema speakers ever passed through a stage of speaking a pidginised version of Abuan. It is, in fact, highly unlikely that they did. What they may have passed through is an interlanguage situation akin to that discussed by Whinnom (1971:97-102) regarding Italian immigrants in Argentina — the typical language learning situation of migrants

immersed in a community in which another language is spoken and in which a stable contact language never develops. Instead, there is an open system which Whinnom describes with respect to Argentina as 'every grade of a finite but huge number of series of continua ranging from (usually sub-standard) Italian to non-native *porteño* Spanish' (1971:97).

Another kind of bilingualism is that in which two groups whose languages are mutually unintelligible speak a third language known to both groups. Telegu-speaking and Hindi-speaking Indians frequently converse in English. This situation is typical of the post-colonial era in which a colonial language such as English, French or Spanish has become a *lingua franca*. The use of a third language between people whose own languages are mutually unintelligible is not, however, restricted to such post-colonial situations. An interesting case is found in the Vaupés region of South-Eastern Colombia. As Jackson (1974:53) reports, all the languages of the Vaupés family are mutually unintelligible. One of these languages, Tukano, is used as a *lingua franca* between other groups (Sorensen 1972:78). These uses of English and of Tukano are both examples of situations in which there is available a third language common to the groups whose languages are mutually unintelligible. The necessity for a pidgin to be developed only arises when no such third common language is available, but, again, not even this guarantees that a pidgin will emerge. As already noted above, the members of one group may be obliged to learn the language of the other, utilising a variety of imperfect versions of it on the way to fuller competence. At the other end of the scale, particularly for very transitory contact, non-verbal communication such as dumb barter may be all that is attempted (Reinecke 1938:107; Naro 1978:318).

People may attempt to speak to each other but until there is an agreement as to what some words mean, verbal communication can not in fact take place. When, however, such an agreement is finally reached, the result is a jargon. People from both groups understand a few key words but there is no agreement or shared understanding as to grammar — that is, as to how the words and morphemes should be organised in linear fashion to mark grammatical relationships and categories. Furthermore, no one is under the delusion that he is speaking the language of the other. Such jargons can attain quite a degree of permanent acceptance, as Silverstein (1972b) has shown with regard to the Chinook jargon.

Under certain other sets of circumstances, a pidgin develops. This means that groups of people whose languages are mutually unintelligible agree upon or achieve shared understandings, firstly on the meaning of a restricted number of words, and secondly on the rules by which they will organise those words into meaningful utterances — that is, they agree on grammar. These 'agreements', of course, are not made in any formal sense.

Central to our understanding of this process must be the realisation that nowhere has any group of people sat down and said "Let us produce a pidgin language"; people either struggle to communicate by any means in their power, without bothering what language they are speaking, or else, if they progress beyond this stage, they perceive themselves as learning some preexisting language (Bickerton 1977:51).

In time, the 'agreed' language develops. It is in the very nature of pidgins, by definition, that they are relatively stable. As Sankoff (1980:140) points out, they have some degree of conventionalisation and sufficient break with all parent languages as to be not mutually intelligible with any of them. The

conditions, however, which lead to their development and the social and linguistic processes by which they develop have intrigued linguists for some time. For the past fifty years or more, linguists with a progressively higher degree of specialisation in pidgin and creole languages have evinced an ever-increasing interest in their origins.

Competing theories of pidgin genesis

As Alleyne (1980:5) remarked, among the wide range of topics studied under the rubric of pidgin and creole linguistics, the genesis of pidgins is one which has attracted considerable attention. Over the years many theories have gained prominence in the literature. The major positions are briefly acknowledged below, after which they will be reviewed in detail.

The first real controversy over the origin of pidgins was in the writings of Hesseling,⁹ particularly his 1933 paper (see Hesseling 1979:62-69). Restricting his comments (as so many have done since) to the master/slave situation, Hesseling disputed Schuchardt's earlier view (especially Schuchardt 1909 and 1914) that the reduced nature of pidgins came about as a result of conscious efforts at simplification by the white masters. Hesseling preferred the view that pidgins owed their characteristics to imperfect learning of the model language by the slaves. These two views or combinations of them and their later developments have tended to be grouped together as the 'baby talk' or 'simplification' theory. The other major theory or set of theories has been generally referred to as the 'diffusion' or 'monogenetic' theory. The monogenetic theory seeks to explain the features which pidgins share, not in terms of universal methods of simplification but in terms of shared linguistic origins.

By 1971, DeCamp considered that opinion was clearly divided between these two theories which he regarded as opposing positions – the 'polygenetic' position that pidgins are universally repeated reoccurrences of the same simplification phenomenon and the 'monogenetic' position that all pidgins are generically related to the one 'proto-pidgin' (DeCamp 1971b:18-23). Todd, in 1974, attempted to classify the theories of pidgin genesis into four groups, the baby talk theory, the independent parallel development theory, the nautical jargon theory and the monogenetic/relexification theory and proposed her own solution to the dilemma in a fifth theory which to some extent synthesised the others (Todd 1974:28-49). Bickerton, in 1977, grouped all earlier theories together, both simplification and monogenetic positions, as theories which were based on incorrect premises, namely that pidgins were linguistically unique and that their nature was explicable only in terms of linguistically unusual events (Bickerton 1977:49-51). Instead, he proposed a theory of pidgin genesis in terms of wider, universal features of language acquisition and in terms of particular social processes (Bickerton 1974a; 1977), a trend which has continued with many recent writers. This is not to say that earlier theorists were necessarily unaware of any social dimension in pidgin genesis. Indeed, they often restricted the pidginisation of languages to very specific sets of social circumstances such as trading or on plantations utilising slave labour. Despite this, it is obvious that attention was always focussed on the supposed linguistic uniqueness of pidgins and therefore on the hypothesising of special linguistic processes to account for them. As noted in the introductory

chapter, many modern theorists have begun to focus their attention on the social contexts in which pidginisation occurs, in the belief that it is the circumstances of pidginisation which are special, rather than the linguistic processes involved (Alleyne 1980; Woolford and Washabaugh 1983).

The various theories of pidgin genesis will now be considered in depth. As a convenient and logical arrangement of the material, these theories will be considered in the chronological order of their formulation.

The 'simplification' or 'baby-talk' models

By the focusing of attention on what appeared to be their most obvious features, pidgins have long been characterised as simplified languages (Jespersen 1922:217-218; Brook 1963:138). The OED (1976) defines a pidgin as 'simplified English or other language used for communication between persons of different nationality ...' while *Webster's NID* (1971) defines a pidgin as 'a form of speech that usually has a simplified grammar and a limited, often mixed vocabulary'.

By comparison with the languages from which they were derived, pidgins are said to have a reduced lexicon, a less complex syntactical structure and an absence of redundant features. It is questionable whether these features do imply linguistic simplicity (DeCamp 1971:15). Pidgins are often thought to be simpler than their lexical source languages because they are more systematic and therefore easier to learn. 'They have jettisoned morphological and syntactic irregularities but they have not sacrificed the ability to communicate precisely and unambiguously the linguistic needs of their speakers' (Todd 1984:11). The classic statement of this view must be Hjelmslev (1939) who considered the structure of pidgins to be optimal rather than minimal. Pidgins are virtually always auxiliary languages and are perfectly adequate for the communicative tasks for which they are used. In discussing pidgins, it is important to distinguish carefully between 'simplification' and 'impoverishment' (Mühlhäusler 1980:21). One should not, however, read these distinctions back into a body of literature in which the former normally implied the latter and in which pidgins were disparaged as 'bastard English', 'mongrel lingo', and 'inferiority made half articulate'.

The reduced vocabularies and grammars of pidgins, long regarded as their most obvious distinguishing features, have given rise to a number of theories which explain the origin of pidgins in terms of these simplifications (Koefoed 1979:37). Collectively, these theories are referred to as 'simplification' or 'baby-talk' models.

Historically, the first theory to emerge was based on the notion of imperfect learning or learner's simplification. During the nineteenth century, with one or two notable exceptions such as Greenfield (1830)¹⁰, pidgin and creole languages were considered to be exotic curiosities or objects of ridicule and the views of almost all who bothered to comment on their origin were shaped by the same social Darwinism that condoned and intellectually justified slavery. This is exemplified in Bertrand-Bocande's views (1849) on Portuguese creole.

It is clear that people used to expressing themselves with a rather simple language cannot easily elevate their intelligence to the genius of a European language. When

they were in contact with the Portuguese and forced to communicate with them, speaking the same language, it was necessary that the varied expressions acquired during so many centuries of civilization dropped their perfection, to adapt to ideas being born and to barbarous forms of language of half-savage peoples (Bertrand-Bocande 1849, in Meijer and Muysken 1977:21-22).

Leland (1876) appears to be the first to have observed or perhaps the first to have recorded his observation that there were certain distinct similarities between the ways in which both child languages and pidgins are modifications of the languages from which they were derived, holding that anyone who could understand 'baby-talk' could understand pidgin English (Leland 1876:8-9). This attitude finds expression in the names which have been given to some pidgins. Pidginised versions of French, Dutch and Malay have been labelled 'petit nègre', 'baby hollands', and 'baba Malay' (Todd 1984:3). Jespersen held that both child language and pidgin languages resulted from 'imperfect mastery of a language which in its initial stage, in the child with its first language and in the grown-up with a second language learnt by imperfect methods, leads to a superficial knowledge of the most indispensable words, with a total disregard of grammar' (Jespersen 1922:234).

This view, which implies a lack of linguistic competence on the part of the native or substrate speaker is nevertheless important in an historical sense because, stripped of its derogative overtones, it at least focuses attention on the native speaker and is thus the precursor of those more modern theories which see pidgins as essentially the creation of the native speaker but also as the result of the native speaker's innovatory linguistic skill. The first creolist to espouse the view that the speech of the learners was the primary source of simplification was Hesseling.¹¹

Disagreeing with Schuchardt, whose theories are discussed below, Hesseling most clearly stated his views in 1933, although as Meijer and Muysken (1977:37) point out, he had foreshadowed them as early as 1906.

Now as master and slave — more and less sophisticated respectively — were not in a position of knowing what was the best way for simplification on the basis of prior study, how is it that the subordinate party, the slave, triumphs and provides the model? Why, because he is the weaker in comprehension and the stronger in imitation. The slaves were less in a position than their masters to conceive of a different manner of communication other than their own; thus they had to content themselves with imitation. So they learn the surface structure of the European languages although they make them suitable for their own manner of thinking. Something therefore emerges which satisfies both parties. The masters hear their own words, however truncated or misshapen, while the slaves employ the foreign material in a way which is not in complete conflict with their inherited manner of expressing themselves (Hesseling 1933, quotation from English translation, Schuchardt 1979:69).

In his phrase 'their inherited manner of expressing themselves', Hesseling was alluding to the influence of the slaves' first languages, the underlying or

substrate languages, on pidgin development. Koefoed (1979:41) divides these influences into 'negative' and 'positive' interference. Negative interference can certainly result in simplification — that is, a feature present in the superstrate language may not be acquired if it is absent in the substrate language. Positive interference — that is, the retention of features of the substrate language — is not necessarily simplification at all but may, indeed, result in complexity.

As distinct from the view which emphasises imperfect mastery of the superstrate language by the learners, Schuchardt,¹² in drawing attention to the observable simplifications and reductions in pidgins, saw a significant aspect of the origin of these simplifications in a reduced model of the superstrate language which its speakers provided for the native learner.

To the master as well as the slave it was solely a matter of the one making himself understood to the other; the former stripped off everything specific to European languages, while the latter restrained everything specific to his language ... The White was teacher to the Black; the latter repeated the former (Schuchardt 1914, quotation from English translation, Schuchardt 1979:74).

When this view was taken up by linguists such as Bloomfield, it was accepted as yet another example of the linguistic and cultural superiority of the white races. According to this view, the native's inability to learn the 'superior' language forced the speakers of that language to simplify it for them.

Speakers of a lower language may make so little progress in learning the dominant speech, that the masters, in communicating with them, resort to 'baby-talk'. (Bloomfield 1933:472).

Pidgin English is a class dialect of a standing inferior to most other varieties of overseas English ... Pidgin English represents an attempt to make English easier for a non-European to use and to understand ... (Brook 1963: 137-138).

Although, as the above quotation shows, Bloomfield categorised languages and their speakers into 'upper' and 'lower', implying inferior linguistic ability in 'slave and tributary people' (1933:472), he nevertheless acknowledged that, in part, the lexicon of a pidgin included a set of words carried around the world by Europeans in the presumption that inferior people universally understood them. In noting also that Europeans imitated the learner's attempts at their speech, Bloomfield was the first to state clearly the 'imitation-of-an-imitation' hypothesis although it was implied in earlier writings.

This "baby-talk" is the masters' imitation of the subjects' incorrect speech. The subjects, in turn, deprived of the correct model, can do no better now than to acquire the simplified "baby-talk" version of the upper language. The result may be a conventionalised jargon. During the colonisation of the last few centuries, Europeans have repeatedly given jargonised versions of their language to slaves and tributary peoples. Portuguese jargons are found at various places in Africa, India, and the Far East; French jargons exist in Mauritius and in Annam; a Spanish

jargon was formerly spoken in the Philippines; English jargons are spoken in the western islands of the South Seas (here known as Beach-la-Mar), in Chinese ports (Pidgin English), and in Sierra Leone and Liberia ...

In spite of the poor recording, we may perhaps reconstruct the creation of speech-forms like these. The basis is the foreigner's desperate attempt at English. Then comes the English-speaker's contemptuous imitation of this, which he tries in the hope of making himself understood. This stage is represented, for instance, by the lingo which the American, in slumming or when travelling abroad, substitutes for English, to make the foreigner understand. ... the English-speaker introduces such foreign words as he has managed to learn (*kai-kai* 'eat' from some Polynesian language), and ... he does not discriminate between foreign languages (savey 'know', from Spanish, figures in all English jargons). The third layer of alteration is due to the foreigner's imperfect reproduction of the English-speaker's simplified talk, and will differ according to the phonetic and grammatical habit of the foreigner's language. (Bloomfield 1933:472-473)¹³

Hall (1966:5, 86) although in no way concurring with the view that the native or substrate speaker was linguistically incompetent, held the view that it was, nevertheless, the European belief in the mental inferiority of the native speakers which prompted 'the intentional simplification of European languages by their speakers, when conversing with supposedly childish natives, on the model of European baby-talk' (Hall 1966:86).

Everywhere the West European went he seems to have adopted the same linguistic behaviour towards the natives of the territories he discovered. The European was normally too sure of the superiority of his own culture to deign to take any interest in indigenous languages; so the native had to do his best to make himself understood to the newcomer in what he could pick up of the latter's tongue. Naturally, his first attempts at talking Portuguese, Spanish, French, or English would be halting. At this point, the European (whether explorer, sea-captain, trader, or sailor) would assume that the native's incomplete efforts at speaking the European's language were due, not to insufficient practice, but to inherent mental inferiority. So the European would conclude that it was useless to use "good language" to the native, and would reply to him in a replica of the latter's incomplete speech, adding also some of the patterns of baby-talk commonly used by mothers and nurses in his own country. The aboriginal, not knowing any better, would assume that this was the white man's real language, and would delight in using it. ... He would also carry over into the new pidgin various habits of his native tongue, not only in pronunciation, but also in grammatical forms and syntax, and of course in vocabulary. (Hall 1966:5)

This 'imitation-of-an-imitation' theory, termed a 'recursive series of imitations' by DeCamp (1971a:19) is the hypothesis most frequently associated with the 'baby-talk' theory and was considered by Whinnom (1965:509) to have become the dominant or 'traditional' explanation of the origin of pidgins. One of the more recent clear statements of this theory is given by Wurm (1971).

... the usually accepted theory of the origin of pidgin languages is the proposition that the substrate speakers imitate the superstrate speakers' imitation of the substrate speakers' imitation of the superstrate language, or, that a pidgin language comes into being as a result of the interaction of a foreign speaker's version of a language and a native speaker's version of the foreign speaker's version. In other words, it is assumed that the substrate speakers try to pick up a few words and sentences from the superstrate speakers which are of relevance and importance in the contact situation, mispronouncing them in accordance with the phonological structure of the substrate language, and often putting the words together into short utterances in the light of the grammatical principles of the substrate language.

The superstrate speakers hear this rudimentary idiom which is marginally intelligible to them, realise its value for better communication in the contact situation in which they have a vested interest, or believe that the substrate speakers are incapable of learning the superstrate language correctly and make some effort to imitate the substrate speaker's way of using the idiom. However, they do not abandon the basic syntactic and structural principles of the superstrate language in doing so.

The substrate speakers, under continued stimulus of the now modified superstrate language, make further attempts at approximating it. Out of this interplay of imitations in the continued use of the forming idiom in contact situations involving the superstrate and substrate speakers, a more or less standard form of the idiom develops ... (Wurm 1971:1000).

As Wurm (1971:1000) goes on to say, however, this theory of pidgin genesis was, in 1971, not without its critics, including linguists such as Thompson (1961), Stewart (1962) and Whinnom (1965, 1971) who held 'diffusionist' or 'monogenetic' points of view and whose theories will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. These and other theorists found the historical reconstruction of pidgin genesis as 'baby-talk' and mimicry implausible. DeCamp (1971a:19), following Cassidy (1961:21-23), argued that 'the white planters and their families were learning the creole from the slaves, not vice-versa', a similar argument to that which Whinnom makes with regard to Chinese Pidgin English (Whinnom 1971:104). It seems to this writer that DeCamp is, on this point at least, confusing the *origin* of pidgins with their perpetuation and even their creolisation. It would seem that once a pidgin has developed and stabilised, it indeed has to be learnt as an already existing pidgin by any newcomers who were not involved in its creation whether or not

they are speakers of any of the languages from which the pidgin was originally derived. Cassidy's observation is important and will be taken up again later, but DeCamp's use of it is inappropriate.

Some opponents of simplification theories found such theories inadequate to explain the high degree of mutual intelligibility between pidgins developing from the same superstrate language but in quite distinct environments and even at different times (DeCamp 1971:19). This observation went far beyond Bloomfield's acknowledgement of European use of special lexical items and seemed to demand that all the superstrate speakers consciously simplified their language in the same manner. Goodman (1964:124) had already proposed that European languages were 'deliberately and systematically simplified', but Todd found this hypothesis 'highly dubious' (1974:30). Alleyne (1971:172) found it 'difficult to accept that such simplification on the part of the speakers of the "upper" language might be either systematic and consistent or widespread and continuing'. These theorists also found simplification plus imitation to be inadequate constructs to explain the intriguing similarities between pidgins which were based on different European languages — the fact that such pidgins could be 'syntactically more similar to each other than they are to the languages from which their lexicons derive' (Todd 1974:31).

A challenging new perspective on this observation was provided by linguists of the school of thought which holds that the simplification of language is a linguistic activity in which people universally engage for a variety of purposes. The most forceful proponent of this theory in recent years has been Ferguson. A linguist with a strong interest in child language (see, for example, Ferguson 1964), he found unavoidable the striking similarities between pidgins and the various simplified registers of the model language on which the pidgins were based such as 'baby-talk' and 'foreign talk'.

It may ... be assumed that many, perhaps all, speech communities have registers of a special kind for use with people who are regarded for one reason or another as unable to readily understand the normal speech of the community (e.g. babies, foreigners, deaf people). These forms of speech are generally felt by their users to be simplified versions of the language, hence easier to understand and they are often regarded as an imitation of the way the person addressed uses the language himself. Thus, the baby talk which is used by adults in talking to young children is felt to be easier for the child to understand and is often asserted to be an imitation of the way the children speak. Such registers are, of course, culturally transmitted like any other part of the language and may be quite systematic and resistant to change.

A register of simplified speech which has been even less studied, although it seems quite widespread and may even be universal, is the kind of 'foreigner talk' which is used by speakers of a language to outsiders who are felt to have very limited command of the language or no knowledge of it at all. Many (all?) languages seem to have particular features of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon which are characteristically used in this situation. (Ferguson 1971:143)

Ferguson (1971) described in detail one particular feature of this simplification — the absence of copula. Ferguson argued that the same linguistic change is being made in a telegram which reads family well and a newspaper headline floods severe as is evident in baby-talk mummy bye-bye or in foreigner talk food good. Ferguson showed that the absence of a copula was a regular simplifying device in 'Type A' languages — i.e. languages which have a copula in sentences of the type 'X is T'. He saw this simplification, particularly in 'foreigner talk', as an explanation of the widespread absence of a copula in pidgins, a phenomenon observed at least as early as Schuchardt (1882).

... this hypothesis ... predicts that speakers of a language of type A will tend to omit the copula when they are attempting to simplify their speech. Specifically it predicts that simplified registers in regular use in the speech community will tend to omit the copula, e.g. baby talk, foreigner talk, telegraph language, newspaper headlines. Going a step further, the hypothesis would suggest that a pidgin language whose lexical source was a type A language would tend to omit the copula ...

For the linguists interested in pidgins and creoles, the most important suggestion of the paper is probably the view that the foreigner talk of a speech community may serve as an incipient pidgin. This view asserts that the initial source of the grammatical structure of a pidgin is the more or less systematic simplification of the lexical source language which occurs in the foreigner talk register of its speakers, rather than the grammatical structure of the language(s) of the other users of the pidgin. (Ferguson 1971:147-148)

Against the background of Ferguson's (1971) paper, Todd's remarks (1974:30-31), that the 'baby-talk' theory cannot explain similarities in pidgins derived from different European languages, seem strange. Todd chooses the absence of a copula as an example of a feature, common to many pidgins, which illustrates their syntactic similarity, a phenomenon which she says the baby-talk theory fails to explain. This example, as shown above is the precise example chosen by Ferguson to illustrate the simplified registers of baby-talk, foreigner-talk and pidgins and indeed, Todd later (1974:46-47) discusses and supports Ferguson's view and provides another set of examples of the absence of copula. It seems even stranger that in his introduction to the volume (Hymes 1971) in which Ferguson's paper is published, DeCamp (1971a:19) should so forcefully claim that the 'baby-talk' theory has 'completely collapsed' without reference to Ferguson's paper at all.

Quite apart from Ferguson's arguments for universal processes of simplification, a dramatic blow was struck in 1978 against those who found unacceptable Goodman's claim (1964:124) that European languages had been 'deliberately and systematically simplified'. In that year, Naro published his paper on the origin of Portuguese West African Pidgin (Naro 1978)¹⁴. So incontrovertible was Naro's solid documentary evidence of conscious and deliberate simplification of Portuguese in West Africa that Koefoed, who was working on a paper to show that the 'baby-talk' theory was not as easily refuted as DeCamp (1971a:19) had suggested, totally revised his paper because

he now regarded his theoretical arguments as superfluous (Koefoed 1979:37). The case, at least as far as Koefoed was concerned, was proven. From meticulous study of historical and literary documentary evidence, Naro (1978) was able to show that a pidgin Portuguese, which he terms the *reconnaissance language*, developed in Portugal as a consequence of attempts to teach Portuguese to captured Africans so that they might act as interpreters on ships sailing to Africa and that this pidgin Portuguese became a well known simplified register for various communicative purposes in Portugal. It was this reconnaissance language from which West African Portuguese pidgins developed.

... the basis for the pidgin Portuguese used in Africa throughout the 16th and 17th centuries ... had been substantially, if not entirely, formed in Europe long before it became current in Africa ... In treating the history of the Portuguese pidgin, we must, therefore, sharply distinguish two periods: first, that of the formation of the pidgin in Europe, beginning with the linguistic training of the first captives by Prince Henry's order of 1435 (with first attested teaching of Portuguese to Africans in the 1440's); second, that of the establishment and spread of the reconnaissance language in Africa ...

Since we are primarily interested here in the origins of pidginization, it is to the first period that we must turn our attention. As has been seen, Portuguese-African language contact first arose in this period in the context of fully conscious, officially instituted language instruction — perhaps carried out in part at the Portuguese court by clerics and other officials normally assigned intellectual duties. We have also seen that, in communicating with Africans, Europeans consciously modified their speech when they thought it necessary in order to establish mutual understanding. In view of this, I conclude that, during the period of instruction, the Africans were presented with a version of Portuguese that had already suffered modifications of the type outlined above ... (Naro 1978:334-335)

Naro (1978) has thus demonstrated that in at least one part of the world, the model language from which pidgins developed was an already modified form of the base language. This evidence is no way inconsistent with Ferguson's argument (1971) that simplification of language for talking with foreigners is a universal occurrence. Indeed, the literature abounds with examples.¹⁵ It seems that Naro has shown that Goodman's claim that Europeans consciously simplified their language (1964:124) is not as dubious a claim as Todd thought (1974:30). As Koefoed (1979:37) points out, the baby talk theory is not as easily refuted as DeCamp presumed (1971a:19).

Another perspective, however, is now being provided by Bickerton and others who espouse a 'language universals' point of view on pidgin genesis. They claim that the question of whether or not base language speakers actually simplified their language for the 'benefit' of the native learners is irrelevant because 'there is good reason to suppose that pidgins would turn out the way they do

irrespective of whether their speakers were offered 'simplified' or 'non-simplified' models' (Bickerton 1977:50). Before examining this 'language universals' perspective on pidginisation, we must first consider in its correct historical sequence the other major theoretical explanation for the origin of pidgins.

The relexification or monogenetic model

Genetic explanations for similarities between pidgin and creole languages are frequently encountered, but as Koefoed points out (1979:39) this is hardly surprising. One should expect, for example, to find lexical similarities between Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea) and Krio (Sierra Leone) because both are English-based or between Chabacano (Philippines) and Kryol (Senegal) because the languages upon which they are based, Spanish and Portuguese, are both closely related. Another kind of similarity is that found between pidgins and creoles which are based on different languages but which have the same or similar substrate languages. An African source, for example, has been proposed for the affixation of the third plural pronoun to form the plural of a noun in French, Spanish and English-based creoles in the Caribbean area (Goodman 1964:44-46, 113; Koefoed 1979:39).

During the 1950s, the publication of information on a steadily increasing variety of pidgin and creole languages led to the observation that there were remarkable similarities in pidgin and creole languages all over the world, languages which were not only derived from different base languages but which had never been in contact with each other. These observations led to what has come to be termed the monogenetic theory of pidgin genesis – the theory that all pidgins and creoles derive originally from a fifteenth century Portuguese pidgin which, in turn, was derived from the medieval *Lingua Franca* or *Sabir*, the common language of the Crusaders and of Mediterranean trade (Todd 1974:33). It is claimed that the original Portuguese pidgin of the African coast was relexified in contact with various European languages to become, in many parts of the world, English, French, Spanish and Dutch-based pidgin and creoles.

The first clear observations of the Portuguese origin of some creoles, ostensibly based on other European languages, were those of Hesselung in 1897 (1979:8-12) who saw the Portuguese origin of Afrikaans and those of Schuchardt in 1909 who noted that 'in Guiana, a Portuguese creole has opaquely developed into an English creole' (1979:31). It was not until half a century later that observations by linguists such as Navarro Tomas (1951) (who showed the relationship between a Caribbean creole, Papiamentu and the Portuguese West African slavers' pidgin) and Whinnom (1956) (who demonstrated the Portuguese origin of several Philippine Spanish creoles) led to the idea that an early Portuguese trade pidgin may have been a common factor in the development of pidgins and therefore of creoles, throughout the world.

Douglas Taylor (1957), in a review article of Whinnom's book (1956), adduced a large number of parallels between Philippine Spanish creoles and Caribbean creoles. As noted by Thompson (1961:107) and Whinnom (1965:516), the common features of many Caribbean creoles had long been attributed to the influence of West African substrate languages (e.g. Sylvain 1936:178; Hall 1966:77) which were considered to be evidence of a common pattern of genesis and development. The linking of New World and Old World creoles now offered the opportunity for

speculating on a much more universal theory. As Thompson (1961:107-108) and Whinnom (1965:516-517) point out, the development of the theory of a common origin of both New World and Old World creoles, was born of the dialogue between those three linguists — that is, between Thompson, Taylor and Whinnom — in the 1950s. Finally, it was Thompson who publicised the theory in a paper written in 1959 and published in 1961. This historically significant statement merits quoting at length.

... certain features which appear to link English, French and other Creole dialects including Papiamentu, in the Caribbean area, also occur in a number of creolized Portuguese dialects of the Old World extending from the Cape Verde islands round the coasts of Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Malaya and the East Indian islands, to Macao, Hongkong and Shanghai. Similar features also occur in three Spanish contact vernaculars of the Philippine islands discussed by Mr. Keith Whinnom in a recent book and called by him *Caviteño*, *Ermitaño* and *Zamboangueno*. Mr. Whinnom shows that these vernaculars originated in the creolized Portuguese dialect of the Moluccan island of Ternate whose Spanish garrison and Christian inhabitants, already considerably Hispanized, were moved to the Philippines in 1658. It is therefore legitimate, and indeed, perhaps essential to group these Philippine dialects with the Portuguese Creole dialects of the Old World, especially with those of the Malayo-Portuguese cluster, i.e. those of Malacca, Singapore and Macao, which are extant, and that of Tugu in Java of which adequate records remain in the works of Schuchardt. The fifteenth-century Portuguese pidgin of West Africa was probably creolized in the region of the factories but used a pidgin once more in the following centuries on the coasts of India and Malaysia. The dialects of Ceylon, Malacca, Java and Macao preserved their West African pidgin appearance while those of the *norteiros* of India grew steadily more like standard Portuguese under the influence of Vice-Regal Goa.

Papiamentu is, according to Professors Navarro Tomas and van Wijk, a development of the West African slavers' jargon. This jargon, much influenced, no doubt, by the West African substratum, may have been the pattern for all the West Indian Creoles just as, in the Eastern and Pacific worlds Portuguese Creole dialects, well known to Europeans of many nationalities, may have provided the models for the two great branches of pidgin English, China Coast pidgin and Neo-Melanesian. It would not be surprising if the same jargon were the West African coastal Portuguese lingua franca which was carried from generation to generation by the Portuguese — and their West African mulatto offspring — to the Portuguese factories which lay dotted along the coasts of Africa and Asia from the Cape Verde Islands to Nagasaki. (Thompson 1961:107, 112-113)

In conclusion, Thompson, excited by these ideas, waxed almost euphoric.

At the Eighth International Congress of Linguists held at Oslo in 1957 Professor Alf Sommerflet asked impatiently for a Caribbean Grammar — a kind of Balkan Grammar of the New World. Perhaps one day we shall be able to offer him the Universal Creole Grammar. And what could be more exciting than that we should prove that this Grammar was a development of that Mediterranean *lingua franca*? (Thompson 1961:113)

This euphoria was, however, short-lived. Hadel (1969) was enthusiastic but the spate of papers to which he refers (1969:35), supporting Whinnom's original hypothesis about the *Lingua Franca* being the universal origin of pidgins and creoles, were, after all, the papers by Taylor and Thompson, who, with Whinnom made up the trio who developed and refined the hypothesis in the first place. In 1965, Whinnom appeared disappointed that his 'suggestion about Sabir was ignored' (1965:523) but by 1971 he was upset (p.107) that it had 'already been subjected to attack' e.g. by Vintala-Radulescu (1967). More recently, Whinnom appears to have been concentrating his research on the nature of the *Lingua Franca* itself (e.g. Whinnom 1977) but despite the obvious importance of this research at the early end of the relexification theory,¹⁶ it sheds no light on the supposed diffusion and relexification of the Portuguese 'Proto-creole' in the more recent historical past. A few scholars such as DeCamp (1971a:23) remained guardedly enthusiastic. Todd (1974) even went so far as to produce a family tree showing the common descent of existing creoles from Sabir (1974:40). Todd's diagram is reproduced below (Figure 1) although as Chaudenson correctly points out (1977:273), Todd was less than enthusiastic about the theory.

If the euphoria was short-lived, the controversy which it caused was not. At the most distant end of the family tree, Naro's discoveries (1978) about the 'reconnaissance language' show that that language was the origin of the West African slavers' pidgins and that it had very few features in common with Sabir although this does not necessarily disprove the Portuguese origin of pidgins and creoles since that time. With respect to the more recent era of supposed relexification in the Caribbean, Johnson (1974:118) has argued that the similarity of the vocabularies of English-based Caribbean creoles is so great that it is powerful evidence against independent English relexification of a common Portuguese-derived pidgin. Todd (1974:39) pointed out that there are large numbers of indigenous pidgins and creoles which have nothing to do with any European languages. Some of the proponents of the monogenetic theory realised this quite early and modified the claim that the theory applied to all pidgins and creoles (e.g. Thompson 1961:113) to the more reasonable theory that it applied to all European-language-based pidgins and creoles (e.g. Hadel 1969:35), thus requiring that at best the monogenetic theory be regarded as only a partial explanation of the origin of creoles. This modification alone destroys the significance of the monogenetic theory as an explanation of how and why pidgins originate. In fact, one of the positive contributions of the monogenetic theory is that it prompted an interest in indigenous pidgins in an effort to seek data independent of the European-based pidgins which had dominated thinking for so long (see, for example, Thomason 1980). Chaudenson (1977:260-261) argued that inferences of genetic relationship between creoles were based on evidence which was far too meagre or even non-existent. Finally, Koefoed (1979) re-examined the data on which the monogenetic theory was based.

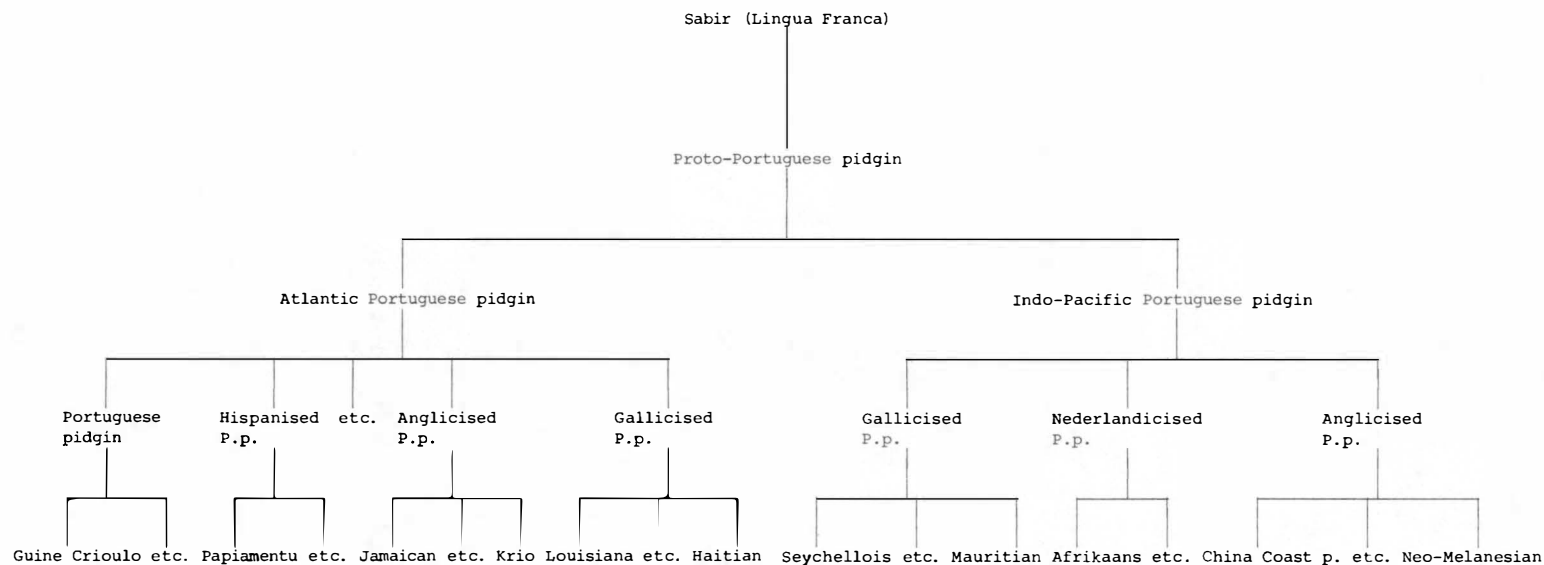


Figure 1: Monogenesis - the hypothetical derivation of all European-language-based pidgins and creoles.
(Todd 1974:40)

Following Whinnom (1965) and DeCamp (1971a), Koefoed listed ten commonly mentioned correspondences between the European-based pidgins and creoles. The list, from Koefoed (1979:49) is given below:

- (a) lexical correspondences, including syntactic function words
- (b) elimination of inflections for number in nouns and for gender and case in pronouns
- (c) a system of preverbal particles to express tense, mood and aspect
- (d) identity of adverb and adjective
- (e) iteration for intensification of adverb-adjectives
- (f) the use of an 'all purpose preposition' na
- (g) development of compound prepositions of the type na + noun + de or some other genitive marker (as foe in Sranan)
- (h) the word for *thing* as interrogative (cosa in Philippine creoles, sani in Sranan)
- (i) the word for *much* derives from a model language word that means *too much*: tro, tumsi, masia
- (j) the overall simplicity of these languages as such. Whinnom argues that "linguistic simplicity is an astonishing rare phenomenon ... We do not want to have to suppose that such miraculous simplicity was achieved independently twice" (Whinnom 1965:522)

Koefoed then goes on to argue that although such similarities clearly exist, the monogenetic model is not necessary in order to explain them. Most of them can equally be explained by independent development. Under whatever circumstances pidgins develop, Koefoed claims that there are a number of common sociolinguistic factors which tend to ensure that similarities such as those detailed above can be expected to occur. Koefoed (1979:39-40) groups these factors into three categories — the process of pidginisation itself, genetic relationship, and borrowing. In reassessing the monogenetic theory, the first two of these are more important. What Koefoed means by the process of pidginisation includes the universal procedures in the way in which the reduction and simplification of model languages comes about. In this, Koefoed agrees with Ferguson (1964). Genetic relationships between both the lexifying and underlying languages also explain many observed similarities but they cannot be pressed into proving a genetic relationship between all pidgins and creoles. Observed similarities are also attributable to borrowing but as this takes place after the formation period of the language, it is part of its later expansion and not, therefore, part of its origin.

Koefoed examined the list of ten correspondences between European-based pidgins and demonstrated that (b), (d), (e) and (i) are precisely those characteristics which we should expect to find in consciously simplified speech. As these similarities are also those which are most frequently said to indicate simplicity, then (j) must also be eliminated. Koefoed then discusses (g) and shows that the construction 'preposition + noun + genitive' (e.g. English 'in view of') is so common in languages throughout the world that it has no value

as evidence of a common origin. There are thus only a few similarities which cannot be explained by independent development and therefore:

... the linguistic basis of the relexification theory in its widest sense — i.e. the hypothesis that all pidgins and creoles from America (eastwards) to Melanesia stem from one Portuguese pidgin — is rather meager. Most of the similarities ... can be plausibly explained by independent development. (Koefoed 1979:51)

The similarities which remain unexplained are, according to Koefoed, a remarkable parallelism in the systems of preverbal markers and a small number of lexical correspondences. Even some of these, such as the preposition *na* and the verbal particle *ka* have been shown to have West African etymologies at least as plausible as Portuguese etymologies (Alleyne 1971:170). Many other Portuguese lexical items are explicable as borrowings via general maritime transmission, rather than residues that have escaped relexification (Gilbert 1980:9). Koefoed therefore concludes not that the relexification theory is to be rejected, but that the supposed Portuguese base must be redemonstrated for each language separately as Whinnom (1956) did for the Philippine creoles and Voorhoeve did more recently (1973) for Sranan and Saramaccan.

The implication of this is that the general hypothesis underlying the relexification theory, that a language can change its lexical affiliation almost completely, is essentially correct. So absence of a reasonable number of lexical correspondences is no longer an argument against common origin. But this does not permit us to assign a Portuguese base to a pidgin or creole only on the basis of features like those listed ... Most of these seem to be 'universals of pidginised speech' rather than the result of a unique historical event. (Koefoed 1979:52)

The monogeneticist position suffers from the fact that the early claims for it were far too wide-sweeping (Bickerton 1977:50). Its defect is that it is not an explanation for the process of pidginisation at all and it should, perhaps, never have been claimed that it was. It does, on the other hand, explain quite reasonably a number of puzzling similarities that are found in many creoles of diverse genetic history in widely separated parts of the world.

The language acquisition model

A major new perspective of pidgin (and creole) genesis has arisen in the last decade, based upon modern theories of second language acquisition. As Gilman (1982:23) points out, there has been a rather large recent literature comparing the formation of pidgins with either the language learning of children or the acquisition of second languages by foreign speakers (e.g. Smith 1973; Schumann 1976, 1978a, 1978b; Slobin 1977; Stauble 1978; Anderson 1979). As models of second language acquisition became more sophisticated, linguists working in the field of pidginisation began to apply the modern theories to their discipline. Although the first clear statement of the relationship of language acquisition theory to pidginisation is in Mühlhäusler (1974:29),¹⁷ the major proponent of this universal language acquisition model has been Bickerton whose series of papers has traced the development in his thinking from 1974 to 1981.

(See Bickerton 1974a, 1975b, 1977, 1979, 1981.) According to Bickerton (1974:125), 'the widely-touted differences between "polygeneticists" and "monogeneticists" are trivial alongside the mass of common presuppositions which they share'. Bickerton, furthermore, questions the validity of these presuppositions, claiming that the debates between scholars holding these supposedly conflicting views 'have generated more heat than light in the course of their existence and ... now prove, like most long-standing arguments, to have been unresolvable, depending as they did on unfounded premises' (Bickerton 1974:136). In his 1977 paper, Bickerton argued that the most serious misconception shared both by those who hold a 'simplification' model of pidgin genesis and those who hold a 'diffusion' or 'monogenetic' model is the underlying belief that the process of pidginisation is something unique or abnormal in the linguistic sense.

The data-base for Bickerton's questioning of theories of pidgin genesis comes from his detailed study of Hawaiian Pidgin English,¹⁸ a pidgin which he has demonstrated to have come into existence this century (Bickerton 1977:51-52). This means that, unlike most pidgins so far studied in detail, all phases of its development have been recently available through informants. Bickerton's analysis of his Hawaiian Pidgin English and Hawaiian Creole data led him to conclude that the generally accepted principles of earlier theories of the origin of pidgins were not empirically true, at least with respect to Hawaiian Pidgin English (Bickerton 1977:50, 61-63). Using this pidgin as his prime example, Bickerton claimed that

- (a) The nature of Hawaiian Pidgin English was such that it could not be explained merely by the simplification of English by the social superordinates nor by the subordinates' inadequate attempts to learn it.
- (b) There are marked similarities between Hawaiian Creole and other world creoles which arose under similar circumstances but these similarities cannot possibly be explained by a common African substratum influence.
- (c) The similarities between Hawaiian Creole and some Caribbean creoles 'could not have come about through diffusion of a pre-existing contact language, since it was precisely the features Hawaiian Creole had in common with other early-creolized creoles that were rarely or never found among surviving speakers of Hawaiian Pidgin' (Bickerton 1977:63).

Of course, the striking feature of pidgins and creoles is their similarity. It was this observable similarity which led, in the first place, to the categorising of pidgin creole languages as somehow distinct. It was their similarity which led some scholars to propose universal processes of language simplification as the major factor in their origin and other scholars to propose that they all had a common ancestry, both of which explanations Bickerton believes his data to refute. Not all creolists unequivocally accept Bickerton's interpretation of the history of Hawaiian Creole¹⁹ but this does not necessarily invalidate his findings.

The conclusion to which Bickerton finally came was that the pidginisation process was explicable in terms of universal strategies of second-language acquisition, operating under special sociolinguistic circumstances (Bickerton 1977:49). Pidgins are indubitably, by definition, second (or nth) languages

but they are second languages with restricted input. This concept has been emerging in the literature for well over ten years. It was hinted at here and there and Bickerton (1979:6) says that he was thinking about it in 1973. As noted earlier, the first clear linking of a second language acquisition model with the process of pidginisation was probably Mühlhäusler (1974:29), Bickerton himself not stating it explicitly in the literature until 1977.

Existing theories about the process of pidginization have all either implied or directly stated that it is a process somehow distinct from other processes of language acquisition, whether these involve a first or a second language. Theories of creolization, while much fewer and vaguer, have similarly suggested something unique about the process.

Such theories have, of course, been extremely useful in the maintenance of pidgin and creole studies as a benighted backwater of linguistics. However ... there is nothing at all mysterious or unique about either process: ... pidginization is second-language learning with restricted input, and ... creolization is first-language learning with restricted input (Bickerton 1977:49).

Bickerton's claim that pidgins are the product of normal second-language acquisition processes with restricted input may appear at first to be little different from some simplification theories which propose that the learner is presented with a much reduced model from which to learn. Bickerton, however, argues that the restricted input is not particularly related to any inadequacies in the model although he agrees (1977:50) that the model was often consciously simplified. Rather, he argues that the restricted input is social in nature and that there are only minimal opportunities for the learner actually to hear the target language spoken. It would, according to Bickerton (1977:50), have the same result whether or not the learners are offered full or modified forms of the target languages.

In fact, the difference between arriving at a pidgin and arriving at a reasonably accurate version of a standard language lies mainly in the availability of target models and the amount of interaction with speakers of the target language. If models of the latter are readily available, and if the speaker interacts only or mainly with those who speak it natively, he or she should eventually acquire a recognisably nonpidginized 'foreigner's version' of that language. If, however, target models are scarce, and if he or she speaks mainly to non-native speakers who suffer a similar restriction of access to the target, the end product will be a pidgin. Situations intermediate between these two will produce varieties of language intermediate between pidgin and 'good foreigner's version', e.g. the English of Fiji or the Philippines. (Bickerton 1977:55)

One of the most important principles here expressed is that the input is irrelevant. What is said to lead invariably to a pidgin is an 'imperfect acquisition device' (Mühlhäusler 1974:58). Whereas an imperfect acquisition device could be linguistically or even neurologically defined, it is specifically, in these circumstances, socially defined. It includes such

phenomena as 'reluctance on the part of the speakers of the target language to communicate with the learner on an equal level', a context which is highly likely to result in the development of a pidgin (p.58). In other words, if language acquisition processes are held constant, the defining variables are social in nature. The pidginisation of a language is thus viewed as a social process.

The social process of pidgin development

It is not being claimed that Bickerton, Mühlhäusler and other researchers of the past decade were the first to suggest that social processes were involved in the process of pidginisation. Rather, it is simply being acknowledged that they were the first to have clearly argued that pidgins are a consequence of normal language acquisition processes and that therefore what makes them distinct from other linguistic phenomena is the social processes which prompt and foster their development. The key to research into the origin of pidgins lies in the sociolinguistic dimensions of the conditions which lead to pidginisation. Grimshaw asked this question in 1971, and it is still being answered.

What is it about the differential experience of language contact sites that has sometimes resulted in pidginisation (variously culminating in creolisation, in the maintenance and continued renewal of the pidgin, in the disappearance of the pidgin or in some few cases, the stabilisation (standardisation?) of the pidgin) and, in other cases has produced no special contact language at all? (Grimshaw 1971:432)

Interest in seeking the answer to questions such as this has only really arisen during the past twenty years, coinciding with the increase in studies of pidgin and creole languages and the doubts which this extensive data were beginning to raise with regard to earlier theories of pidgin genesis. This is not to say that the early theorists ignored the social dimension. They did not, but they tended to do the opposite to Bickerton, Mühlhäusler and other modern theorists by holding constant the presumed social conditions and seeking the reason for the emergence of a pidgin in unusual linguistic circumstances. Thus the earliest writers generally regarded the development of pidgins as being synonymous with the slave trade, a position which is understandable in view of the specific languages about which they had detailed information (e.g. Schuchardt 1914[1979]:74; Hesseling 1933[1979]:69; Bloomfield 1933:472). In the last twenty or so years, it has been realised that the social dimensions were more complex and thus not able to be so simplistically dismissed. This realisation was largely due to the increased research into pidgin and creole languages and the new light the consequent new data was beginning to shed on many theoretical issues surrounding the pidginisation and creolisation of languages.

Some of the earliest attempts actually to specify the social conditions under which pidgins arise include Voorhoeve 1962; Reinecke 1964 and Stewart in Grimshaw 1971. Voorhoeve (1962) discussed the development of Sranan from the point of view of four sociolinguistic dimensions: the numerical proportion between language groups, the social relation between language groups, the geographical distribution of groups and the rise of a two-caste system.

Reinecke (1964) grouped what he called 'marginal languages' into trade jargons, plantation dialects and settlers' creoles. Stewart proposed three sociolinguistic dimensions: multilingualism, the relationship between the social groups using the pidgin and the degree of difference between their own languages. Grimshaw was the first to call for a systematic analysis of the sociolinguistic dimension of pidgin genesis. He suggested that the more significant variables would include the pattern of conflict relations (first between the dominant group of prestige language speakers and the subordinated population and, secondly, among the subordinated groups), the industrial and commercial contexts within which contacts have occurred (including the social organisation of work), the demographic variable of the number of speakers involved and the linguistic characteristics of the societies in contact (Stewart in Grimshaw 1971:432-433). Grimshaw argued that, in endeavouring to discover the truly significant sociolinguistic determinants of pidgin genesis,

Ad hoc response to individual cases has not provided a viable base for theoretical development ... the questions ... will not be satisfactorily answered until linguists and sociolinguists systematically examine the entire range of relevant cases (Grimshaw 1971:443n9).

Grimshaw's challenge has not yet been fully taken up and as recently as 1982, Gilman was concerned that writers were still taking limited perspectives based on a knowledge of a group of related pidgins or creoles rather than a systematic universal approach.

An unfortunate feature of some writing on pidgins and creoles is that many writers tend to see the whole field from the point of view of their own experience. Writers familiar with Caribbean creoles write as though all pidgins and/or creoles were part of a diglossic continuum; those familiar with Hawaii write as though all pidgins showed extensive variation; those familiar with West Africa assume a highly multilingual environment; etc. (Gilman 1982:21).

Some excellent contributions to systematic sociolinguistic research have been made including Woolford and Washabaugh (1983), which is a valuable and recent collection of research papers. There have been, as well, in the decade since Grimshaw called for systematic sociolinguistic studies, a number of important but independent pieces of individual research such as Clark's (1979) attempt to bring together research findings across the Pacific region. A worthwhile review of the sociolinguistic perspective up to 1974 is given by Mühlhäusler (1974). Although he was concerned largely with the nature of the actual processes of pidginisation and simplification of languages, he also made a significant contribution to the determination of sociolinguistic criteria, reviewing those factors generally discussed in the literature up to that time. Mühlhäusler (1974:29) acknowledged the importance of trying to find sociolinguistic universals of pidginisation and creolisation. In doing so, however, he also warned that it was necessary to distinguish between causal and concomitant factors and between theories of the origin of pidgins and theories of the social function of pidgins.

An extreme but probably tongue-in-cheek example of the failure to distinguish causal and concomitant factors is found in Vitale (1980:52) who quotes an article from the *Kenya Weekly News*²⁰ which states that *Kisetla*, a pidgin

Swahili spoken between Africans and European highland settlers 'is found in its purest form where coffee and wheat flourish in preference to coconuts, sweet potatoes or wimbe ...'. A more widespread example is the general insistence that pidgins are the result of the slave trade or of European colonial expansion. It is, of course, true that many well-known pidgins did arise in these circumstances. This observation is not, however justification for claiming that slavery or colonialism were universal social factors which gave rise to all pidgins.

An example of the failure to distinguish between theories of the origin of pidgins and theories of the social function of pidgins is the inference that because speakers of various Chinese languages used Chinese Pidgin English in speaking to each other, the need for a lingua franca between them was the reason for the development of this English-based pidgin in the first place. In fact, it could be said that most pidgins end up being used in contexts different from those in which they arose.

Mühlhäusler (1974:29) suggested a provisional list of twelve possible sociolinguistic parameters of pidginisation and creolisation, (a few of which are therefore more relevant to the process of creolisation and other later stages in the life of pidgins). Mühlhäusler's twelve parameters were the nature of the contact, the duration of the contact, illiteracy and second language learning, cultural differences between groups, the prestige of the target language, the prestige of pidgins and creoles, the number of speakers involved, the sex of the speakers, official language policy, race relations, group solidarity and, finally, isolation versus contact with regard to target language. As Mühlhäusler himself notes, there are other possible factors and some are of less significance than others. There are as well, in this writer's view, some notable exceptions, particularly the influence of multilingualism.

From an examination of Mühlhäusler's list of factors, of those which were put forward earlier than his and those which have been expressed or implied in the literature since then, the most important sociolinguistic factors in the development of a pidgin would appear to be:

- a) the lack of effective bilingualism;
- b) the nature of the contact;
- c) the duration and extent of the contact;
- d) the need and desire to communicate;
- e) multilingualism and the prior use of *lingue franche*.

These will now be examined more closely.

The lack of effective bilingualism

The absence of a common language is obviously the most basic sociolinguistic parameter of all. Clearly if two groups of people do not know each other's language or a third common language, verbal communication is not possible. Trade, migration, war and colonisation are all examples of contexts where people have, often suddenly, been forced into contact with other people with whom, initially, they have no means of communication. Pidgins may develop in such language contact situations as one of a range of possible responses to the need to communicate. Some possible responses have been discussed earlier so there is no need to repeat them here. The question, really, is why, in the

absence of a common language, does a pidgin develop in one place and not in another — what Grimshaw (1971:432) called 'the differential experience of language contact sites'.

The nature of the contact

Although it has not been particularly helpful for theorists to restrict discussion of the development of pidgins to one specific set of social circumstances, most frequently plantation slavery, it is nevertheless true that the social context of the language contact is a very important factor. Particular milieux do tend to give rise to pidgins and as a consequence, this aspect of the social process of pidgin genesis has been the most extensively documented.

One of the earlier attempts to identify the types of contact situations in which pidgins have typically developed was Reinecke (1938), which claimed that the only three contact situations which resulted in pidgins sufficiently stable to be described were contacts for the purposes of trading, or on plantations, or between settlers and indigenous inhabitants (1938:109). This may be an overgeneralisation as there are other circumstances in which pidgins are known to have arisen. Military occupation is one such milieu, recent examples being the Japanese Pidgin English which came into existence during the American occupation of Japan (Goodman 1967) and the Korean Pidgin English which appeared during the Korean war (Algeo 1960; Webster 1960). It is also true, however, that these pidgins served their purposes and have probably disappeared. The forty pidgins from which Reinecke developed his generalisation (1964:536) no doubt fell into the three groups he proposes. His conclusion is, after all, hardly surprising as the categories he suggests must include a significant proportion of recent or present day pidgins.

Mühlhäusler (1974:33) discusses this issue, closely following Reinecke in adopting a tripartite classification of the types of contact situation under which pidgins develop. His three categories are indigenous trade pidgins, plantation and mining pidgins and European colonial trade pidgins. This generalisation is slightly more refined than Reinecke's and is quite a useful, if incomplete, set. Mühlhäusler's tabulated data is given below.

Table 1: Mühlhäusler's classification of pidgins (1974:33)			
	INDIGENOUS TRADE PIDGIN	PLANTATION AND MINING PIDGIN	EUROPEAN COLONIAL TRADE PIDGIN
RELATIVE SOCIAL STATUS	equals	master-slave	equals
PIDGIN SPOKEN BETWEEN	speakers of a fairly large number of individual vernaculars	Europeans and speakers of other languages and between speakers of these languages	Monolingual Europeans and speakers of a number of vernaculars
TOPICS	Trade	Various topics	Trade

Indigenous trade pidgins have certainly existed for a very long time and have been reported from many different parts of the world. The recognition of their existence is important because it dispels the misconception that pidgins only result from the contact between some 'great world language' and a local language (Nida and Fehderau 1970:146). There are an increasing number of examples in the literature which come from widely separated places. American Indians around the Gulf of Mexico and up the Mississippi River once spoke a trade language now termed *Mobilian* (Haas 1975; Drechsel 1975, 1984). In the region centering on Manianga in the Lower Congo, the trade language *Kituba* flourished for approximately 300 years before it came under any influence from European languages (Fehderau 1967; Nida and Fenderau 1970). On the south coast of Papua, the *Hiri* trading language had been spoken long before police and other government officials began to utilise the so-called *Hiri Motu* (Nida and Fehderau 1970; Chatterton 1971; Dutton and Kakare 1977; Dutton 1983). In Europe, *Russenorsk* was spoken between residents of northern Norway and Russian fish buyers until the First World War (Broch 1927, 1930; Neumann 1965). These and other indigenous trade pidgins highlight the important principle that generalisations concerning the origins of pidgins which only acknowledge European plantation, trade or colonial contexts must be treated with caution.

Plantation and mining pidgins are among the better known pidgins, largely due to the fact that many of them have now become creolised to become the first languages of large groups of people. They share a common milieu for their development – an essentially European-owned industry employing slave labour or other types of deported or recruited labour. More often than not, plantation owners specifically mixed slaves or labourers with differing language backgrounds expressly to minimise the possibility of any large-scale insurrection (Whinnom 1965:516; De Camp 1971:20). In these circumstances, a pidgin language rapidly developed, becoming both the language of master-slave communication and the language spoken between workers whose languages were mutually unintelligible. An example of a plantation pidgin was *Gullah*, spoken to and by African slaves on the rice plantations of South Carolina and Georgia in North America (L. Turner 1949; Rickford 1977). An Australian example of a plantation pidgin was the so-called *Kanaka Pidgin English* spoken on North Queensland sugar plantations (Mühlhäusler 1979), an antecedent of modern Torres Strait (Cape York) Creole (Crowley and Rigsby 1979; Rigsby 1984) and possibly also of many other South Pacific pidgins (Clark 1979:43). *Fanagalo* (Cole 1953), a pidgin which was used in the South African mining industry, was an example of a mining pidgin, grouped by Mühlhäusler with the plantation pidgins because with recruited or even forced labour, these mines were socially very similar to plantations, although Mühlhäusler (personal communication) now suggests that *Fanagalo* may in fact have originated in the sugar plantations of Natal. So invariably did the plantation phenomenon result in a pidgin that Bickerton (1979:7) has recently suggested that if one actually wanted to create a pidgin, the establishment of a plantation modelled on those of the 18th and 19th centuries would be the surest way to succeed.

European colonial trade pidgins were the result of European colonial and trade expansion and included among them are many widely known pidgins such as *Chinese Pidgin English* (Hall 1944). This era saw throughout Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific, the emergence of pidgins based on the languages of all European countries engaged in colonial and trade activities. These languages include English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and Italian (Reinecke et al 1975). Many of these pidgins became very famous. Whereas plantation pidgins were restricted to the labourers and overseers, the European trade

pidgins of the colonial era were encountered by traders, officials, ship's crews and travellers over a long period of time. They were frequently reported, for comic effect or local colour, in travellers' tales, poems and newspaper articles. Many of their features have been immortalised in the literary caricatures of the 'native'. (See, for example, Sayer's (1944:26) instructions for the use of pidgins by would-be authors.)

The value of Mühlhäusler's table, then, is that it provides condensed information on three major sets of circumstances which tend to produce pidgins. However, like any attempt to place phenomena of the real world into categories, some data do not fit the scheme. A number of pidgins cut across more than one of Mühlhäusler's categories. The original Melanesian Pidgin English, for example, was used both for trade and on plantations. Some pidgins do not really fit any of the categories. Military pidgins are one example. They have already been noted and, in fact, Mühlhäusler himself acknowledges them (1974:32).

The nature of the contact situations, under which some English-based pidgins developed in Australia do not really fit Mühlhäusler's categories, either. As noted already, 'Kanaka Pidgin English' was primarily a plantation pidgin, although as a variety of Pacific pidgin it was also to some extent a trade language. This is not true of the pidgins which developed in, for example, south-eastern Australia and in the Northern Territory. They cannot be regarded as European colonial trade pidgins, as trading was a minor and insignificant aspect of their use. Reinecke's category of 'settler's pidgins' appears to fit them better as they largely arose as a consequence of the attempts by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to communicate with each other as the non-Aboriginal settlers moved progressively throughout the continent. The development of these pidgins, particularly in the Northern Territory, will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

The duration and extent of the contact

Because, by accepted definition, a pidgin is a contact language which may be used only in restricted types of communication, there is no theoretical lower limit to the time necessary for a pidgin's initial development. A pidgin is what Ferraz (1983:120) calls a rapidly evolving emergency language which can begin to develop once two or more groups learn to share the meaning of a few words from one or both of their languages and to use these words in ways which do not disobey the elementary linguistic ground rules which become established. Such a process can begin in a matter of days or even, perhaps, hours (Mühlhäusler 1974:33). However, as noted earlier, Reinecke (1964:534) has pointed out that verbal communication is not always attempted when people of differing language backgrounds come into contact with each other. If, for example, the contact is brief and discontinuous and limited to a few simple transactions, speech may be dispensed with. Dumb barter, as a form of communication is reported from many parts of the world, and Australia is certainly no exception. The diaries and journals of the early Australian explorers are full of examples. Exchanges such as this one of Stuart's are described by virtually all of them.

... five natives ... As it is my intention to pass
peaceably through the different tribes, I endeavoured to
make friends with them by showing them we intended them no

harm if they will leave us alone. One of them had a curious fish spear, which he seemed inclined to part with, and I sent Mr. Kekwick to get some fish-hooks to exchange with him, which he readily did; we then left them. They continuing a longer time than I wished, and gradually approaching nearer to our camp, thinking perhaps they really did not wish to part with the spear, I sent Mr. Kekwick back with it to them to see if that was what they wanted, and to take the fish-hooks from them. But when they saw what was intended, they gave back the spear and retained the hooks. They offered another with a stone head upon the same terms, which was accepted.
(Stuart 1865:416)

In other circumstances, if there is an expectation on the part of either group that the contact may be prolonged or advantageous or even given a reasonable degree of curiosity, verbal communication may well be attempted. In such situations, it is likely that a pidgin will begin to develop quite rapidly, perhaps within hours (Todd 1984:12).

Given linguistic contact over a reasonable period of time, the actual extent of that contact becomes an important factor in whether a pidgin develops and stabilises or whether some other response occurs such as, for example, the development of full bilingualism on one or both sides. A pidgin is likely to develop in situations in which the opportunities of exposure to the model language are restricted — what Traugott (1981:1), calls 'circumstances of minimal social integration'. The argument here, although important, becomes somewhat circular. Language contact only occurs on restricted occasions and for restricted purposes. The model language presented is therefore restricted. The opportunity to learn and use it is restricted (i.e. there is an imperfect language acquisition device). So the language which develops for communicative purposes is restricted — i.e. it is a pidgin.

This is, of course, the major thrust of Bickerton's contention (1977:49) that the 'baby-talk' issue is irrelevant because no matter what model language is offered, the model from which a pidgin develops is always impoverished or restricted because it is only ever used to speak about a limited range of subjects. In the development of many of the more widely researched pidgins, this was a matter of social ranking which is why Mühlhäusler (1974:58) emphasises the 'reluctance of the part of the speakers of the target language to communicate with the learner on an equal level'. In these circumstances there was certainly a frequent 'reluctance' on the part of the European masters to use the full language, often in the belief that the natives could only understand simplified forms. There was also, however, the rigid preservation of social distance so that the 'reluctance' was also manifested in an unwillingness on the part of the masters to converse as equals with the slaves — that is, an unwillingness to converse as frequently or on the same range of topics as equals.

Important as it may be in the development of some pidgins, social distance is not a factor in the development of all pidgins of which many trade pidgins, particularly indigenous trade pidgins are examples. Certainly some trade pidgins developed in European colonial and other circumstances in which traders may have consciously preserved social distance and used simplified speech but these do not appear to be the critical factors. Pidgins have arisen where social or inter-ethnic group ranking is not clearly defined at all. What is

common to all pidgins is that the communicative circumstances themselves are restricted. Social class certainly imposes such restrictions but so do distance and time. Some groups of people communicate rarely. Some kinds of trade are only seasonal. The opportunities for people involved in such activities to hear and learn the full versions of each other's languages are minimal and, in fact, to do so is unnecessary.

The need and desire to communicate

Although the need to communicate is closely allied to the nature and extent of the contact, it is sufficiently important to be discussed separately. Some ostensibly similar contact situations may in one case give rise to a pidgin and in another may not. Military occupation may in some cases give rise to a pidgin (e.g. Japanese Pidgin English), but in other cases may not give rise to a pidgin at all. As Nida and Fehderau (1970:154) point out, prolonged aggressive contact may lead to the aggressor language being adopted at the expense of the local language. Similarly, foreign settlers may or may not engage in communication with the local inhabitants and although settler's pidgins do commonly arise, they do not invariably do so. All that may develop is a jargon or there may be no desire or attempt to communicate at all. On the other hand, if co-operation is a pressing necessity everyone will soon learn how to communicate (Weinreich 1964:viii).

Indeed the whole aspect of desire and intent may be crucial to the development of a pidgin as opposed to other possible solutions to the problem of communication. In his insightful 1972 paper, Silverstein (1972a) makes a major contribution to this issue from the perspective of what was actually happening linguistically between settlers or traders and Indians in colonial America. Silverstein endeavours to analyse what the various parties to language contact believed they were doing and also what they were actually doing which, as Silverstein (1972a:17) demonstrates, were not necessarily the same thing. Borrowing from Meillet the phrase '*sentiment et volonté d'appartenir à une même communauté linguistique*', Silverstein translates '*sentiment et volonté*' as 'feeling' and 'intention', the feeling that speakers have that they are speaking a particular language (1972a:4). While Meillet used the phrase in the context of the subjective feeling or intention that underlies historical language continuity, Silverstein (1972a:30) extends it to the feeling, which people may have in a language contact situation, that they are indeed speaking the language of the group. After detailed sociolinguistic analysis of several North American contact languages, Silverstein comes to these conclusions:

Clearly, in the case of Trader Navajo, our dauntless traders feel they are speaking — or ought to speak — Navajo; in Chinook Jargon, no one is really under the illusion he speaks someone else's language; in Montagnais-French contact, each side thought it was speaking the other language, but was mistaken; in Delaware-White contact we had an interpreter class who endeavoured to learn Delaware, such as were the results. In some cases we have people wishing to speak language X but having a drastically-reduced grammar; in some cases we have people wishing to speak language X and actually using a reduction of their own grammar; and in the inverse cases, we have no intention of speaking X but sharing and not sharing part of the same grammar.

Four possibilities thus arise; how shall we interpret them? Where we have substantially the same grammar, we must call this a *language community* if the speakers have the sense of speaking the same language. If not, we have convergent dialects probably of different, but genetically-related languages (e.g. Serbo-Croatian, or French-Spanish in the Pyrénées). In the case where people have essentially different, though reduced grammars and do not feel that they speak each other's language, this is merely a *speech community*. Thus Chinook Jargon speakers can communicate even though their grammars are distinct; they hold in common lexical items and language universals. Finally, the fourth case, where grammars are substantially different but people want to speak the same language as some model language community (e.g. Trader Navajo) is a common enough situation. This I would call a *pidgin situation* at the outset ... (Silverstein 1972a:46-48).

Thus it is Silverstein's contention that a critical factor in the genesis of a pidgin is that in a language contact situation where grammars are substantially different, one group has the desire to speak the language of the other.

Multilingualism and the use of *lingue franche*

One of the effects of the upsurge of interest in pidgin and creole studies, and the subsequent availability of comparative data, is the realisation that pidgins have often been observed in situations in which one language was in contact with a number of languages. Of these, many of the indigenous trade pidgins are the most obvious examples.

Ewondo Populaire is one of the names given to a pidginized Ewondo spoken in the vicinity of Yaounde in Cameroon ...
to facilitate communication in a multilingual area.
(Todd 1974:39, emphasis added)

Clearly Ewondo Populaire, and many other indigenous trade pidgins, some of which have already been cited such as Kituba, Mobilian and the Hiri trade language, were in fact used to enable a number of linguistically distinct groups to communicate with each other. However, as Wald (1981:24) points out, it is necessary to distinguish between origin and usage, between the 'evolution' of a pidgin for a particular purpose and its 'availability' for that purpose. The question which needs to be answered, therefore, is the question of whether the number of language groups who eventually communicate by means of the pidgin is a factor in the origin of the pidgin or whether it is more accurately a resulting feature of its subsequent usage. Indeed it is difficult to propose a mechanism by which a large number of independent groups of people speaking mutually unintelligible languages could have got together and pidginised another language which none of them yet knew.

Nevertheless, as Traugott (1981:1-2) points out, Whinnom (1971) argues strongly the case for pidginisation being restricted to a 'many-to-one' contact occurring between the speakers of the many (substrate) languages and the one (superstrate) language. Whinnom argues that designations such as 'Chinese Pidgin English' and 'Hawaiian Pidgin English' mask the fact that the substrate

is not a single language. 'Hawaiian' is a convenient geographical term whereas sociolinguistically at the time of the genesis of the pidgin, it could be taken to include not only Hawaiian speakers, but Chinese, Japanese, Korean and many others. Similarly with 'Chinese Pidgin English':

... 'Chinese' can stand, and, I should argue, in this instance does stand, for more than one language. In other circumstances, it is obvious that one could not have, for instance simply a Twi Pidgin English ... a pidgin always arises ... from a situation involving a target language and two or more substrate languages ... (Whinnom 1971:106).

Is it indeed obvious that one could not have simply a Twi Pidgin English? Whinnom tries to prove that it is not possible, very largely from a hypothetical example which is somewhat divorced from the real sociolinguistic world in which pidgins actually arise. Whinnom argues (1971:105) that it is 'obvious' that a French-based pidgin would not arise from the communication of an English-speaking school boy with a French school boy whereas a French-based pidgin could easily arise from the communication of an English school boy with a German school boy provided that French was their only common language. Whinnom (1971:106) then justifies his analogy on linguistic grounds. Because, Whinnom hypothesises, the target language, French, is removed, neither the English nor German speaker has any opportunity or motive to improve it. Consequently, certain 'essential pidgin features' would readily be produced. According to Whinnom, these would include a lexicon limited to those French words the English speaker and German speaker had in common, the use of paraphrases to render concepts for which the French word was not known, the mis-pronunciation of French words to the point of being unintelligible to a French speaker and the simplification of syntactical forms such as verb conjugations and genders.

Whinnom's analogies grossly oversimplify the situation and therefore produce false explanations of the origin of pidgins. What are the real-world sociolinguistic equivalents of Whinnom's individual English, German and French speakers? Let us examine his second analogy first. Whinnom quite obviously proposes an English *schoolboy* and a German *schoolboy* because it is important to his speculation that neither of them have complete command of their common language, French, i.e. they have *schoolboy* French and, in the absence of the target language, it could reasonably be argued that their French would not remain mutually intelligible with standard French.

Bearing in mind that Whinnom's real world equivalents of his English and German speakers are groups of people and not individuals, the latter situation in which two or more groups whose first languages are mutually unintelligible both share another common language, is quite common. In India, speakers of Tamil and Hindi frequently communicate with each other in English. The language which they use is not a pidginised version of English, but a version or dialect of English, which, through long association with India, has developed regional variations — a non-native English (see Kachru 1982:passim).

What about the real world equivalents of Whinnom's English and German *schoolboys*? What is proposed here is two groups of people who have no common language but who share incomplete knowledge of a third language. This incompletely acquired third language, Whinnom claims, is what these two groups pidginise in developing a contact language. If this is, as Whinnom clearly claims it to be, an explanation of the *origin* of a pidgin, the model leaves

some critical questions unasked. What is the real-world equivalent of the schoolboy French and where did it come from? The partly-learned French of the schoolboys seems to lack any real-world equivalents. They have learnt what they know in a structured classroom situation. The French language was not simplified or impoverished for them, but rather the less complex words and sentences had been selected on their behalf by someone else – the teacher or the text book writer – for pedagogical reasons. Furthermore, their learning had taken place in an environment in which their pronunciation and grammar were continually corrected.

This would seem to be a rare situation in the real world. What seems more likely is that two groups of people already have a pidginised version of a third language and that this is what they use in communication with each other. Although they will most certainly change the pidgin in various ways, the pidgin already exists. Many groups of people who, as a speech community, possess an incomplete version of another language, possess a pidgin.

The real answer appears to lie in a reversal of Whinnom's first analogy. Whinnom (1971:105) argues that a French-based pidgin would not be produced between an English-speaking and a French-speaking schoolboy. If, however, one tried to make Whinnom's analogy more like the real world, one would have to propose certain social conditions under which the interaction would occur, conditions which could well lead to the development of a pidgin. If, for example, the schoolboys were enemies and communicated as little as possible or if perhaps the French boy was older than the English boy and not inclined to communicate except on essential matters or if the French boy had all the food and the English boy had to bribe or trade or barter in order to obtain any and this was their only communication or if the French boy lorded it over the English boy and ordered him around but did not otherwise communicate – under all these kinds of circumstances, it is likely that the English boy would develop a pidginised version of French. It is also likely that the French boy might even use this pidgin himself to communicate with the English boy.

In other words, in the real world, given groups of people who do not share a common language, it is not uncommon for one group to pidginise the language of the other, the reason being that although the ability to communicate verbally may be more advantageous to one group than to the other, access to the very language they wish to acquire may be restricted.

In, for example, a trading situation, the trader who voyages around will initially at least use a version of his own language. In the various places visited, the groups who wish to trade may try to learn a little of the trader's language, but they will do it separately. Each group will only have the opportunity to hear the 'target' language, in this case the language of the traders, on strictly limited occasions. Each group will finally develop a pidgin based on their limited access to the traders' language. In a later stage of development, these separate groups will discover that they have a lingua franca – that is, that they share a common pidgin or, at least, that they share pidginised versions of the same language and that many words are common to each of their pidgins. The groups may then begin to communicate with each other using the pidgin. They may modify and extend it, but this does not mean that, as a collection of groups, they corporately create it. Rather, they create their own pidgins separately. The selection and use of common material is not part of the original genesis of the pidgin but rather a function of its later areal extension.

A clear example is the development and spread of the 'Macassan' Pidgin in coastal North Australia, which is discussed fully in Chapter 4. In this case, fisherman-traders from south east Asia, traditionally called the 'Macassans', voyaged annually to the north coast of Australia. At many localities, various groups of traders developed long-standing relationships with the local Aboriginal communities. The traders utilised a South-east Asian trade language and the Aboriginal communities developed versions of that language in order to communicate with them. Thus similar but not identical trade pidgins arose in a number of places. When these Aboriginal groups became aware of their common relationships with the 'Macassans' and discovered the features common to their local trade pidgins, they began to standardise a version of the trade language for their own inter-group use. Thus the 'Macassan' pidgin became the *lingua franca* of the northern coast.

It is not being claimed that this situation is invariable. Careful research by Dutton (1978; 1983), for example, has shown that although a pidginised form of Motu was used by Motu-speaking people in communication with many of their trading partners, it was not the language of their *hiri* trade voyages to Elema-speaking villages. A pidginised form of Elema was utilised instead. Dutton (1983:100), however, emphasises that this is a rare situation. It is more common for people initially to develop variant pidgins of the trader's language and eventually to standardise them.

Bickerton's observation (1977:51) that a pidgin is more often used between speakers of various substrate languages than between speakers of one substrate language and speakers of the target or superstrate language, is an important observation. It does not necessarily indicate, however, that this fact is related to the origin of the pidgin. Rather, it too is an observation of the usage of the pidgin, of its later areal expansion.

The discussion of indigenous trading pidgins and plantation pidgins leads to the conclusion that a number of groups of people who cannot speak to each other do not create a pidgin by corporately setting out to pidginise another language. They are highly likely, however, to take rapid advantage of the discovery that they share pidginised versions of the same superstrate language, rapidly extending and modifying it into a common pidgin.

Another set of circumstances which must be distinguished from the origin of a pidgin is the learning of an established pidgin by people not involved in its creation. The oft-quoted plantation situation is an obvious example. The plantation pidgin had to come from somewhere. If it was not brought to the plantation as an existing pidgin, then it was created on the plantation. It is commonly and no doubt accurately held that it would have been created initially for communication between superstrate-speaking plantation overseers and slaves. Later on, although much sooner, perhaps, than in the expansion of a trade pidgin, the slaves with different language backgrounds would have commenced using the pidgin between themselves. Later again, newly arrived slaves and newly arrived overseers also learned the pidgin. They did not create it — it was already there — and at least initially, they would not have recognised that what they were learning was a pidgin.

It can also be argued that multilingualism, the possession of a number of languages by a group, predisposes such a group to the rapid acquisition of yet another language. This is what Bickerton (1977:51) meant when he said that 'a high proportion of the "natives" were multilingual autodidacts with well developed strategies for acquiring second, third and nth languages'.

Furthermore, people who are already accustomed to the use of pidginised languages as *lingue franche* would logically be much more likely to possess strategies for pidginising another language than people from speech communities which were strictly mono-lingual. For this reason it is historically short-sighted and even ethnocentric to presume that the arrival of European people in a coastal area marks the first contact with foreign language speakers. It is far more likely that local indigenous pidgins or trade pidgins arising from rather more regional trade negotiations would have preceded European language contact in many parts of the world and that the use of these would have predisposed people to the rapid development of other pidgins, if and when the need arose.

Conclusions

It was shown earlier in this chapter that the linguistic processes involved in the creation of a pidgin are now widely thought to be universal processes of language simplification and second language acquisition. The critical factors determining whether or not a pidgin will develop in a given situation are social in character. This is why, as noted earlier, a number of writers have challenged researchers to discover what these social processes are, to discover what it is about the differential experience of language contact sites which sometimes results in a pidgin and sometimes does not (Grimshaw 1971:432). Having surveyed what the literature says about the social process of pidginisation, can we determine which factors are fundamental? Can we, as Mühlhäusler (1974:29) emphasises, distinguish factors which are actually causal from those factors, albeit frequently observed, which are nevertheless only concomitant?

As the foregoing survey of the literature shows, it is deceptively easy to slip into the error of elevating frequently observed concomitant factors to the status of universals. Many pidgins are coastal. Foreign trade, plantation slavery and colonial expansion *do* frequently appear to give rise to pidgins. Personal multilingualism is often a characteristic of pidgin speakers. None of these, however, is a sociolinguistic universal. Rather, they are historical observations. Coastal people frequently encounter linguistically diverse foreigners and develop means of communication with them. They thus frequently acquire new languages or pidginised versions of them and this multilingualism becomes a culturally favoured skill, predisposing the acquisition of yet more languages. European colonial expansion, trade and slavery were all essentially maritime activities. They have thus, in recent centuries provided some of the best documented milieux in which pidgins have arisen. One must, nonetheless, probe deeper. What is it about those contexts which prompted the creation of pidgins? What do these contexts have in common with the contexts in which indigenous non-European pidgins have developed? What factors are causal?

In each of the contexts there is no effective bilingualism and in each of the contexts there is, on the part of at least one of the groups, the desire to communicate. These two factors are obvious prerequisites to the need for the development or acquisition of a *lingua franca*, but they do not alone guarantee the development of a pidgin.

One factor emerges as crucial. In all of the contexts in which a language has been pidginised, there is an inadequate opportunity for the target language to be learnt. This is what Bickerton (1977:49) meant when he said that

'pidginization is second language learning with restricted input'. It is what Mühlhäusler (1974:58) meant by an 'imperfect acquisition device'. A language acquisition device includes access to the target language, and if this access is inadequate, then the language acquisition device is imperfect. Restricted opportunities to interact with speakers of the target language must produce a pidgin and this is irrespective of the nature of the model they provide. Mühlhäusler has expressed this diagrammatically.

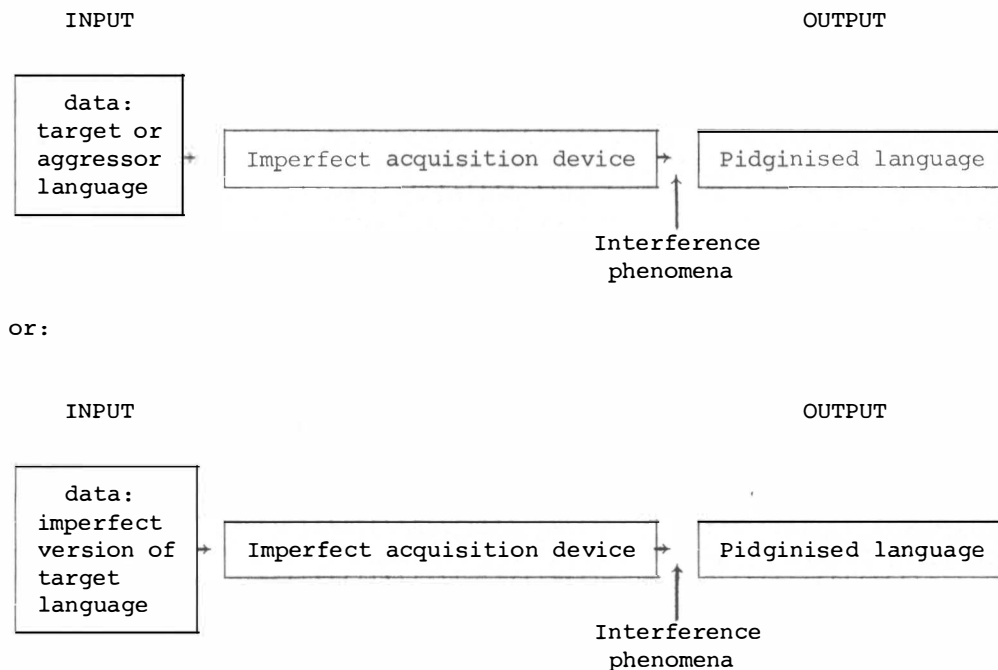


Figure 2: Pidginisation as modified version of standard scheme of language acquisition (Mühlhäusler 1974:58)

This language acquisition model will be discussed again in Chapter 9 in the light of the historical and sociolinguistic data on Northern Territory pidgins in Chapters 4 to 8. The same data will also enable further discussion of other theories including simplification and relexification models.

CHAPTER 3

CREOLES AND CREOLISATION

A creole is generally said to be a pidgin which has become the mother-tongue of a speech community (O'Donnell and Todd 1980:44). There is, as noted in Chapter 2, probably more definitional controversy over the nature and definition of creoles than of pidgins (DeCamp 1977:4). Nevertheless, as Alleyne (1980:2) points out, conferences of creolists do take place and creolists, despite their differences, talk to each other and presumably know what each other is talking about. In other words there is a recognisable group of languages which can best be described as creoles.

The use of the term 'creole' in a strictly linguistic sense is a relatively recent innovation whereas the term itself can be traced back several centuries. Its etymology is interesting because of the way in which it defines a particular social milieu, the European colonies.

The English form of the word comes from the French *créole* which, in turn, comes from the Portuguese *crioulo*, which is ultimately derived from *criar* 'to breed or raise up'. As early as the sixteenth century, the term was applied to people of Spanish descent born in the colonies (Todd 1974:24) and shortly thereafter extended to all Europeans born and raised in the colonies (DeCamp 1971a:15, 1977:6). The term creole then started to be used for anyone born and raised in the colonies, including indigenous natives and African and other slaves (Cassidy 1961:21-23). The meaning gradually extended to include the customs and languages of creole people (Todd 1974:25). In particular the term was applied to certain languages in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa. Later it was extended to other languages of a similar type, although the OED did not acknowledge this usage until the 1972 supplement.

In the earliest serious linguistic studies of pidgins and creoles, the two were not often clearly separated. Hesseling, for example, while clearly distinguishing between a trade jargon or pidgin as an auxiliary language and a creole as the native language of a speech community (Meijer and Muysken 1977:37), failed finally to distinguish between the processes of pidginisation and creolisation. Hesseling's major concern was the simplification of forms, a process which he saw occurring both in the formation of a jargon or pidgin on the slave ships and in the subsequent formation of a creole in contact with European colonists (Hesseling 1905:59).

Schuchardt, however, distinguished pidginisation and creolisation more clearly, especially in his later writings. In particular, Schuchardt (1909) clearly expresses the concept of what has now come to be called the pidgin-creole lifecycle (Hall 1962).

It was approximately fifty years ago that terminology and definitions that were to become standard began to emerge (Hymes 1971:4) in the writings of linguists such as Bloomfield (1933) and Reinecke (1937), although in those years, creole languages were still generally considered 'inferior' or 'marginal' (Reinecke 1938), even by serious linguists. The term 'creolization' in reference to the process by which a pidgin becomes a creole was probably first used by Bloomfield (1933:474).

... a jargon or lingua franca is nobody's native language
 ... in many cases the jargon or lingua franca dies out ...
 In some cases, however, a subject group gives up its native language in favour of a jargon. This happens especially when the subject group is made up of persons from different speech-communities, who can communicate among themselves only by means of the jargon ... when the jargon has become the only language of the subject group, it is a *creolized language*. (Bloomfield 1933:474)

The emerging agreement as to the range of languages defined as pidgins and creoles became most evident after the 1930s in the writings of the prolific Robert Hall, who was the major figure in pidgin and creole studies for the next twenty five years (see, for example, Hall 1943, 1944, 1957, 1962, 1966). Since the 1960s, with the tremendous growth in research into pidgin and creole languages, agreement as to the precise nature of pidgins and creoles has diverged rather than settled, in a continuing discussion which will probably never be concluded. Given the degree of controversy, it is ironic that linguists working in this field are now generally referred to as 'creolists', their area of interest being referred to as 'creolistics'. In this sense, at least, academia has gone full circle for one never hears of 'pidginists' or 'pidginistics': the terms 'creolist' and 'creolistics' now subsume them.

The definition of 'creole' with which this chapter began was taken from a chapter on pidgins and creoles in a book which addresses a wider context of language variety. It is in such compact formats, rather than in more detailed technical papers in edited volumes on creole languages, that creole linguists are obliged to make succinct statements and to state clearly the general defining characteristics of creoles.

A *creole* is a pidgin which has become the mother tongue of the members of a speech community. Often the simple structure that characterises pidgins is found also in creoles, but a creole, being a mother tongue of its speech community, has become capable of expressing the entire range of human experience. Its vocabulary is thus often more comprehensive, its syntactic system more flexible and precise than the majority of even expanded pidgins because these latter are normally used together with one or more vernacular languages. (O'Donnell and Todd 1980:44)

Sometimes it happens that a pidgin becomes the main language of a community and acquires native speakers. If this occurs, the language is known as a *creole*, and — while it remains mixed and simplified in a technical, linguistic sense — it is no longer impoverished or restricted, as it is used by its

speakers for all the purposes speakers need to use their native language for. Thus, a creole is a perfectly normal language, except that its history may be somewhat unusual. (Trudgill and Hannah 1982:95)

Another source of these compulsorily succinct statements is general articles on creoles in journals devoted to a much wider field of scholarship. Mühlhäusler (1979) provides such an example from an Australian context.

If parents of different linguistic backgrounds use a pidgin to communicate at home, their children will grow up speaking this pidgin as their first language. If this happens in many households of a community, the nativised pidgin can become the language of a new speech community. This process is known as *creolisation*. A creolised pidgin or *creole* is structurally more complex than a second language pidgin as it has to meet all the communicative requirements of native speakers. The structural complexity of a creole is comparable to that of any other natural language. (Mühlhäusler 1979:43)

These and many other definitions in the literature indicate three general principles which seem to have the widest acceptance as the defining characteristics of creoles.

1. Creoles arise from pidgins.
2. Creoles are the primary languages of new speech communities.
3. Creoles are structurally and semantically more complex than pidgins.

These three features provide a reasonable framework for the more detailed discussion of the nature and origin of creoles which follows.

What happens to pidgins

It was not entirely without reason that earlier linguists did not really distinguish between pidgins and creoles. Not only was there insufficient data available, but pidgins and creoles are related phenomena and consequently share not only certain linguistic features but also certain geographical and historical milieux.

The complex relationship between pidgins and creoles is further complicated by the fact that not all pidgins become creoles. There are other alternative paths that pidgins may follow (Hymes 1971:43). Some die out while some remain pidgins for a long time, occurrences which, like creolisation itself, are entirely the consequence of social factors. A number of writers have found it useful to express the model of the pidgin-creole life cycle diagrammatically.

Woolford's diagram is, of course, an oversimplification but so is any diagram. It is a useful starting point, however, and clearly stresses that the major pressure on a pidgin to undergo creolisation is the pressure to fulfil the need of a primary language of an emerging speech community.

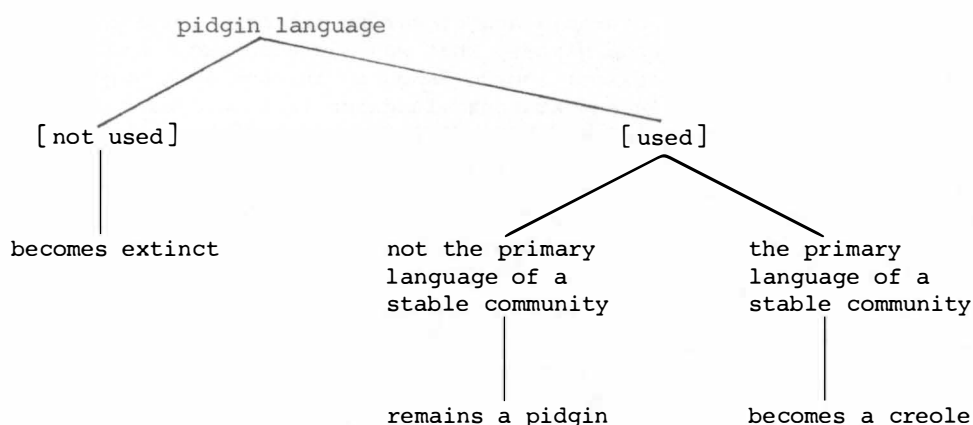


Figure 3: Three paths in the pidgin-creole cycle
(adapted from Woolford 1983:7)

Two developments which are missing from Woolford's diagram are the stages through which pidgins themselves move, whether or not they creolise, and the post-creole continuum along which some creoles develop towards their lexical source language. Mühlhäusler (1979:43) defines three stages of pidgin development although it is as well to bear in mind that there is a continuum of development with no clearly identifiable static points along the way.

Mühlhäusler's three main stages are jargon, stable pidgin and expanded pidgin.

Table 2: Main stages in the pidgin continuum (Mühlhäusler 1979:43)

STAGE	STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES	FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
Jargon e.g. Thai-English	One or two-word sentences, very small lexicon, simple sound system, great individual variation.	Used for communication in limited referential domains, e.g. trade, labour recruiting.
Stable pidgin (e.g. Chinese Pidgin English)	Simple sentences as well as some complex ones, social norms concerning linguistic correctness.	Used for communication in a fixed number of domains, for social control and, to a small extent, self-expression.
Expanded pidgin (e.g. Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea)	Complex grammar, development of a word-formation component, increase in speech tempo.	Used in almost all domains of everyday life, for self-expression, word-play, literature, instrumental in providing cohesion in heterogeneous groups.

Some varieties of pidgin and creole are closer to the main lexical source language than others. In some places, what was a creole has developed into a regional dialect of the lexical source language through long exposure to it. The continuum between creole and standard language is sometimes referred to as the post-creole continuum (DeCamp 1968, 1971b) or decreolisation (Whinnom 1971; Day 1974). It is important to note that this is not just a temporal or historical continuum but a modern sociolinguistic continuum. The two linguistic systems, creole and standard language, inter-influence each other so that in places such as Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, West Africa, and the West Indies, there are

'... not two distinct systems but an unbroken spectrum between the pidgin or creole on the one hand and the prestigious standard language on the other. There is no point on the continuum where we find a sharp break between the subvarieties ...' (O'Donnell and Todd 1980:52)

O'Donnell and Todd go on to illustrate this point from Guyana, showing a graded range of eighteen recorded alternatives along the continuum from *mi gii am* to *I gave him*. Similar continua can be cited from any area of the world where a creole or pidgin co-exists with the standard language from which it was derived. Mühlhäusler (1979:44) also expresses the pidgin-creole life cycle diagrammatically, including both the expansion of pidgins as continuing pidgins as one dimension of the cycle and the decreolisation of creoles as another. Mühlhäusler's diagram refers to English-based languages, but it is obviously of universal application.

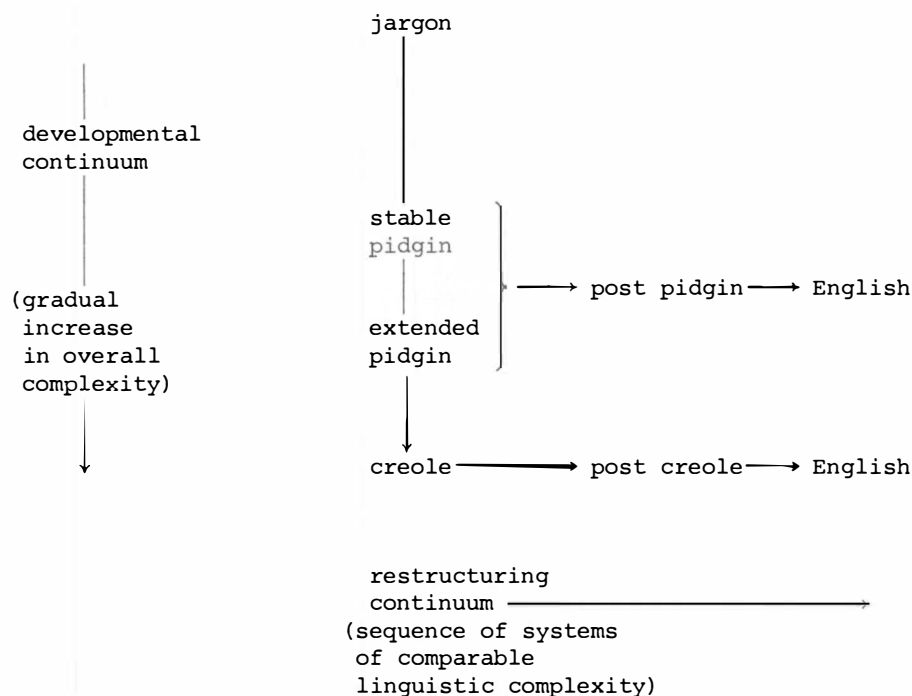


Figure 4: Mühlhäusler's pidgin and creole developmental continuum (1979:44)

Such diagrams are useful as visual approximations of complex systems but Mühlhäusler would probably be the first to admit its inadequacies and indeed the limitations of any diagram which inevitably gives the impression of discrete language stages by freezing on paper something which cannot be frozen. In fact, Mühlhäusler (1980:19) regards the replacement of static models by dynamic models as the most important innovation of the recent theories which have significantly altered the course of pidgin and creole studies.

There are many more complex possibilities than Mühlhäusler's diagram shows. In his more recent work, for example, Mühlhäusler (1980:32) has made the observation that creolisation can take place at any stage of the developmental continuum from jargon to expanded pidgin. This is in contradiction to Bickerton's claim (1974a:126) that creolisation after stabilisation of a pidgin is a rarity. Bickerton also expresses his model in diagrammatic form.

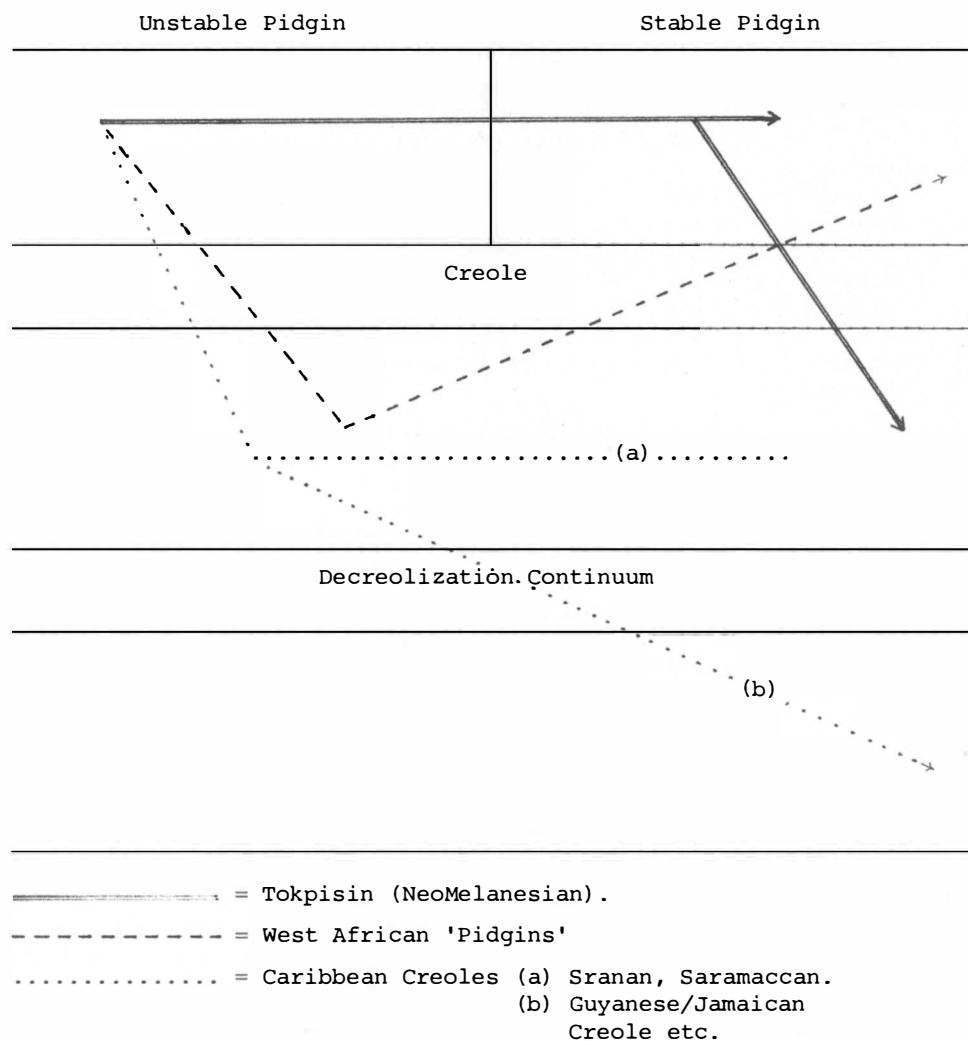


Figure 5: Differential paths of pidgin/creole development
(Bickerton 1974a:138)

Ostensibly, Bickerton's diagram presents three language-development pathways. The first or Tok Pisin pathway, however, Bickerton (1974a:126) dismisses as 'a very rare one'. The second or West African 'Pidgin' pathway represents a situation in which it is thought that 'an unstable, early-stage pidgin used in the coastal forts and their adjoining townships was creolized in mixed families and subsequently 'repidginized' by being used as a contact vernacular' (p.126).²¹ Bickerton can therefore regard their creole stage as in the distant past. Thus the only pathway Bickerton considers important is the third or Caribbean pathway.

Figure 1 suggests a critical circumstance which is probably true for a majority of pidgin/creole situations, and certainly true for Hawaii ... and for Sranan and Saramaccan, which must have formed within the seventeen years between the English occupation of Surinam and its cession to the Dutch. This is, that they must have creolized while still in one or other of the first two process-stages ... while they were still highly unstable, very poorly developed, and still without any true underlying structure of their own. In the case of Hawaii, we have empirical evidence for this, but it should be pretty obviously true for any plantation creole; I know of no case where people have practised birth-control while awaiting the development and stabilization of a vernacular. Hardly have the first slaves, indentured laborers, hired hands or whatever got off the boat than they start to conceive offspring (as who wouldn't?), and within three years there are people running around needing a native language to talk to one another in.

In other words, *creolization must take place before a pidgin has had time to stabilize.* (Bickerton 1974a:126. Emphasis his).

It is clear that Bickerton narrowly redefines what a creole is in order to restrict his hypothesising to those circumstances which fit his theories, a strategy which seems strange in view of the significant contribution he has made to the understanding of pidgins and creoles as part of a language system which is both complex and dynamic. In his more recent writings, Bickerton continues to employ the same strategy although he explains more carefully why he chooses to ignore certain creoles. Bickerton (1981:2) argues that the term 'creole' has come to be used too freely in reference, not only to any language which was once a pidgin and subsequently became a native language, but even in reference to any language, ex-pidgin or not, which has undergone massive structural change due to language contact. Bickerton goes on to claim, not only that this definition is too wide, but that the traditional 'ex-pidgin' definition is also too wide.

Bickerton (1981) has an obvious and important reason for narrowing the set of creoles. The main thesis of his book is that human beings are born with a 'bioprogram for language which can function even in the absence of adequate input' (1981:xiii). This is an important hypothesis indeed and Bickerton's writings, together with the discussions they have prompted, are a significant contribution to the understanding of human language acquisition. A critical set of data for Bickerton's purposes consists of those creoles which have arisen where the normal continuity of language transmission was severely

disrupted, where, according to Sankoff (1979:24), there is a catastrophic break in linguistic tradition. Bickerton (1981:3), consequently, consciously excludes creoles in whose history the severity of that break may have been mitigated by other factors. There are two major creole types in this category, those where large numbers of target-language speakers were present at the inception of the creole, such as Reunion Creole (see Chaudenson 1974) and those which have expanded and stabilised slowly during use by several generations of speakers of an indigenous language, such as Tok Pisin (see Mühlhäusler 1977). Bickerton therefore excludes those variables.²²

... I shall use the word *creole* to refer to languages which

- 1) Arose out of a prior pidgin which had not existed for more than a generation.
- 2) Arose in a population where not more than 20 percent were native speakers of the dominant language and where the remaining 80 percent was composed of diverse language groups.

... By limiting our research area in this way, it becomes possible to concentrate on those situations in which the human linguistic capacity is stretched to the uttermost (Bickerton 1981:4).

Bickerton's book (1981) is a significant contribution to an understanding of human language acquisition. It is, however, less valuable as an explanation of the origin of creoles unless the narrower definition is adopted. If, on the other hand, the more generally agreed definition is accepted, then Bickerton's discussion applies fully to only a small proportion of that set. Indeed, it could be argued that the Tok Pisin situation tends to be the norm throughout the South Pacific region rather than the exception. It seems that South Pacific creoles are derived from stable, even expanded, pidgins rather than newly developed pidgins. As well as New Guinea Tok Pisin, such creoles include Vanuatu Bislama and the Australian creoles. Because of this kind of observation, Mühlhäusler (1980:32) disputes Bickerton's claim (1974a:126) that creolisation of a pidgin before stabilisation is the normal pathway. As noted above, Mühlhäusler's view is that creolisation can take place at any stage of a developmental continuum.

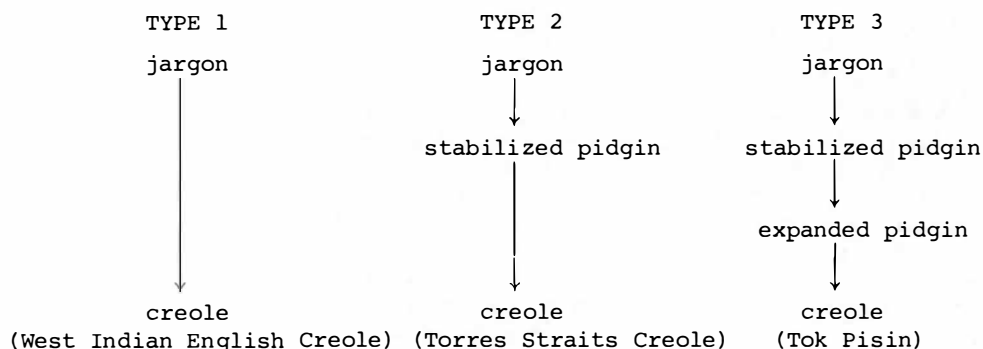


Figure 6: Three types of creolization (Mühlhäusler 1980:32)

This discussion leads finally back to the beginning of this chapter where the definitional controversy which surrounds the field of pidgin and creole studies was acknowledged. It has been and will continue to be an invaluable catalyst to progress in the field. Nevertheless, significant as Bickerton's recent contributions may be to the understanding of human language development in general and of a small set of creoles in particular, his narrowing of the definition of creoles is a less useful construct for studying the creoles of the South Pacific region because it excludes them from the definition. In this sense, Bickerton's work provides yet another example of the domination of the slave-trade and plantation society, which continues to 'exert a particular thrall' in pidgin-creole studies (Sankoff 1979:24).

... the plantation system as it was organized in both Atlantic and Pacific areas has been crucial in the development of "pidgin" and "creole" languages as we know them ... in fact we know of no cases where a "pidgin" has developed in conditions other than those of modern European colonial expansion. The plantation system is so crucial because it was unique in creating a catastrophic break in linguistic tradition that is unparalleled. It is difficult to conceive of another situation where people arrived with such a variety of native languages; where they were so cut off from their native language groups; where the size of no one language group was sufficient to insure its survival; where no second language was shared by enough people to serve as a useful vehicle of intercommunication; and where the legitimate language was inaccessible to almost everyone. (Sankoff 1979:24)

It must be acknowledged that studies of those pidgins and creoles which grew out of the European plantation system have played an important role, not only in the development of the pidgin-creole field of linguistic study but also in the understanding of language itself. On the other hand, as shown in Chapter 2, the last decade has seen an increasing awareness of the necessity to adopt a more universal approach. Grimshaw (1971:443n9) called for a systematic linguistic and sociolinguistic examination of the entire range of pidgins and creoles. This view was even more strongly expressed by Gilman (1982:21), who criticised the narrow perspective of writers who tried to generalise about universal phenomena on the basis of their own limited experience of a particular creole or set of creoles, more often than not from a specific geographical region.

It was argued in Chapter 2 that theories about pidgins and their origin, which were based solely on data related to those pidgins which developed as a consequence of European colonial expansion in general and the plantation system in particular were founded on an inadequate data base. Similarly, theories of the origin of creoles based upon those extreme situations which obtained in slave-worked plantations are inadequate to explain what is, in fact, an important universal phenomenon. It is that under certain social pressures, pidgins, whether they be at a jargon or stable expanded stage, may develop into creoles. The following section considers what those social pressures are.

The primary language of a speech community

The second major defining characteristic of a creole is that it has become the primary language of a speech community, although in the literature the terms native language, mother-tongue, first language and primary language have been used rather indiscriminately (Bloomfield 1933:474; Hall 1966:xii; DeCamp 1971a:16; Wurm 1971:999; Todd 1974:3). In the previous section of this chapter it was argued that under special circumstances, in the pidgin-creole life cycle, a pidgin at any stage of development may evolve into a creole. What are those circumstances? When it is said that a creole is the primary language of a speech community, the essential feature of those circumstances is defined. Creolisation begins to occur when it is necessary for a pidgin to fulfil a role which it is as yet unable to fulfil but for which there is no other alternative. The catalyst to creolisation is social pressure to fill a communication gap.

Once a pidgin has been created or imported into a community, its continued survival and its evolution toward creole status and beyond both depend primarily on its role in the society, not on its inherent structure. The drastically limited vocabulary and syntactic devices of a pidgin need not in themselves lessen the chance of survival ... in so far as any pidgin is capable of expansion whenever changing social conditions call on it to perform a role greater than minimal interlingual communication ... (DeCamp 1971a:25)

In other words, there is a crucial connection between social context and the processes of language change which eventuate in the creolisation of a pidgin (Woolford 1983:2). It is the elucidation of these social processes and their correlation with particular language processes which will enable creolisation models to be developed with universal applicability.

Why do some pidgin languages creolize almost immediately following their formation, whereas others creolize slowly, if at all, or even die out? It appears that although there are internal linguistic principles that govern the theoretically possible linguistic paths along which a pidgin may develop and that thus determine the linguistic structure that a developing creole will have, it is external factors in the social context in which a pidgin language is used that determine whether it will creolize at all, and if so, how quickly. (Woolford 1983:2)

As has been stated a number of times already in this work, the pidgin-creole field has been dominated by studies of plantation pidgins and their subsequent creolisation. In this sense there is little difference between the early writers' concentration on the slave plantation and Sankoff's relatively recent (1979:24) statement that she knows of no pidgin-creole milieu other than modern European colonial expansion. Even those who acknowledge other milieux often infer the superior significance of plantation-related developments by choosing their major examples from such contexts.

A creole language arises when a pidgin becomes the native language of a speech-community. When Negroes were imported from Africa to the Caribbean area, their new masters deliberately separated slaves who came from the same African tribe, so as to lessen the danger of conspiracy and revolt

among those speaking a common language. The only language the plantation slaves had in common was a pidginized variety of their masters' tongue: English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese, as the case might be. As time passed, the slaves married and raised families; the children of such unions perforce learned, as their first language, the pidgin that their parents and the other slaves spoke together in default of any other common tongue. As successive generations grew up using the new language from earliest childhood, they re-expanded its grammatical and lexical resources to meet all the needs of their way of living. (Hall 1966:xiii)

As admitted in Chapter 2, the association of pidgins and creoles with plantations and slavery was until recently a conventional generalisation rather than a conscious choice based on sound linguistic theory. The best known, most obvious and most frequently studied creoles did indeed arise from that milieu. On the other hand, Bickerton's restriction of creoles to the plantation context is a conscious decision. There is, as shown in the previous section, an obvious reason for this choice. Plantation creoles continue to be the most obvious examples of creoles. They are, in a sense, the simplest examples. They arise in a situation of virtually maximal language disruption, they have the least input from their source languages and they develop in the greatest isolation from other primary languages. For these reasons, studies of plantation creoles have been important because they have enabled and continue to enable the process of creolisation to be studied in the absence of as many complicating variables as possible. The contribution of the study of such creoles to our understanding of all creoles is significant and the sociolinguistic aspects of their origin are worth examining.

As the above quotation from Hall shows there are four sociolinguistic features which are said to define the specific nature of this linguistic milieu.

1. The slaves came from a variety of language backgrounds and could not communicate with each other.
2. The only language the slaves had in common was a pidginised version of the masters' language.
3. The children of the slaves learnt their parents' pidgin as their first language.
4. This new generation and the subsequent generations re-expanded the pidgin – that is, they creolised it.

In these circumstances, the pressure to create a primary language in the absence of any other alternative, is the pressure which stimulates creolisation, and this is, in fact the specific sociolinguistic circumstance under which all creoles arise. It is also important that the children are seen as the major creolisers. This, too, is true of very many creoles. The conventional interpretation of the plantation milieu is that the adults were not important because they continued to speak a pidgin between themselves.

... the population has been uprooted and transported away and the linguistic cohesion and communication patterns have been completely destroyed. The result, as shown in the Hawaii plantation Pidgin-English, is extreme variability in the Pidgin speech pattern, to the point where speakers

of various linguistic sources ... merely use English-based vocabulary in a most rudimentary and reduced grammar, based most commonly on their native syntactic patterns. Under these circumstances the first generation of children born on the plantation get such a conflicting and non-cohesive grammatical input, that they are forced to resort to their Universal Grammar competence and thus to create, *di novo* and within their first 5-6 years, the Creole. It is thus the children, rather than their parents, who are responsible for the universal linguistic features of the Creole. (Givón 1979:30)

It needs to be clearly seen that this model, the Bickerton model, requires a special set of circumstances. Bickerton is, of course, aware that adults have communicative needs and will therefore also expand the pidgin to fill those needs. Given a relationship as close as marriage, it is obvious that there will be pressures to develop a language capable of expressing all that such a relationship demands. In other words, pidgins will expand. It is therefore very important to Bickerton's model that procreation begins to happen very rapidly.

Hardly have the first slaves, indentured laborers, hired hands or whatever got off the boat than they start to conceive offspring (as who wouldn't), and within three years there are people running around needing a native language to talk to one another in. (Bickerton 1974a:126)

In other words, according to this model, creolisation (i.e. by the children) must take place before the adults have had time to expand and stabilise the pidgin. In the wider context, this model appears to be difficult to sustain. There is one crucial factor which Bickerton's model demands. This is the presence of women. Bickerton may be able to demonstrate in Hawaii that procreation began the moment the labourers arrived, but this is a set of circumstances which would need to be proven for each creole. Is there convincing evidence that there were significant numbers of women or even any at all at the very beginnings of the plantation system? In the South Pacific, under the indentured labour system which Bickerton lists as one of his creole milieu, the key factor of an early generation of children is missing, largely because there were, at first, few, if any, women.

The languages that evolved as products of these radical, extraordinary circumstances of language contact were to a considerable degree dependent on the specifics of labor organization on plantations. The main distinction to be made here is between the "Atlantic" plantations which used slave labor and the "Pacific" plantations which used indentured labor. The slave labor force was at least to some degree reproduced by "natural" human reproduction, whereas the indentured labor force was almost entirely reproduced by the continued importation of workers on a short-term contractual basis. (Later developments in the Pacific also saw most of the indentured laborers remaining as immigrants.) Contrasting labor policies thus resulted in an early generation of child language learners in the first case, in contrast to their virtual absence (at least during the early period) in the second. (Sankoff 1979:25)

In other words, it may well have been the case on many plantations that there was more input from expanded pidgins than Bickerton's model demands. There may well, too, have been more input from the substrate languages. Bickerton's model, which, again, may have been true for Hawaii demands a language mix with the numbers of speakers of each language so small that there was not a significantly large language or speech community with which a person could interact. If, however, there are sufficiently large numbers of speakers of particular languages, those people may interact mostly with their own language group and use a pidgin in less frequent communication with other language groups.

Clearly there are many more facts about the way in which plantation labor was organized that bear on our linguistic concerns. One is the relative size of the language groups involved. In Hawaii, for example, heterogeneity seems to have been much less than in the case of Queensland, Samoa, and Fiji in the early period. When surrounded by a sizable group of *wantoks* (Tok Pisin for people who share a language), the pressure on anyone to participate in new language learning would probably have been somewhat reduced, and native languages might survive into first and even second generations of immigrants, with correspondingly greater influence on the evolving creole. (Sankoff 1979:26)

The pattern of blackbirding (labour recruiting) in the South Pacific led to periodic shifts of the blackbirders' hunting grounds due to depletion of earlier ones or the presence of Christian missions or government regulation (Docker 1970). The consequence was that in places such as Samoa, Fiji, Queensland and New Caledonia, there were significant numbers of labourers from each of a small number of language groups. In 1885, for example, there were, on German plantations in Samoa, 124 labourers from the Kingsmill and Gilbert Islands, 187 from the New Hebrides, 156 from the Solomon Islands, and 45 from New Britain and New Zealand (Mühlhäusler 1983a:40). In Queensland in the same year, there were 1379 labourers from the New Hebrides, 516 from the Solomon Islands, and only 20 from elsewhere (Price and Baker, 1976:110-111; Dutton, 1980:112).

The only conclusion that can be drawn is that in some plantation contexts, the linguistic situation did not differ greatly from many non-plantation contexts in which creoles have arisen, situations where the home language gradually proves inadequate and a pidgin is creolised to fulfil increased communicative demand. An interesting case in East Africa is described by Polomé (1983:130).

We are not dealing here with a diglossic situation such as the one in Jamaica or Haiti, but rather with ... *triglossia*, i.e., the coexistence of three languages, each with different functions depending on prestige, social status, political, cultural, economic, or other important roles of their speakers — one, at least, being confined to very specific roles (e.g. at home). Indeed, there is still a strong prevalence for French as the prestige language, which is used in education and in the upper levels of economic and sociocultural life. Swahili (in its local form) is the market language, the current means of intertribal communication, the urban dialect in which everyday business is conducted at work, in the shops, in public offices; it is used in broadcasting and by popular

musicians; it is the language of the youth among their peers. The vernacular is restricted to the family, if both parents speak it, and to relations with the home village. It is important to note that detribalization in the urban context leads to mixed marriages, where the home language tends to become Swahili; children growing up in such an environment adopt Swahili as their first language. By this process Shaba Swahili has shifted with the present generation from lingua franca to creole in the urbanized centers of the Katangese copper industry. (Polomé 1983:130)

Again, the children or younger generation are seen as important. They adopt a pidgin, in this case an expanded one, but a pidgin nevertheless because of its restricted communicative adequacy, and they (i.e. the younger generation) creolise it. Complex speech communities and complex language competences like this lead to the necessity to distinguish carefully the various labels that are applied to these emerging languages. As noted at the beginning of this section, there has been a rather indiscriminate use of terms such as native language, mother-tongue, first language, and so on. In the complex situations with which we are dealing, mother-tongue and primary language are not necessarily the same thing at all. Even mother-tongue and home language may not be the same.

The use of these terms has been so loose that there is little point in trying to define them, but they can at least be given some consistent usage for the purposes of this discussion. Mother-tongue, then, could be said to be the language which the infant child learns from its mother. In many cases it could be called the language of infancy. On the other hand, where there are mixed marriages the home language, as spoken between husband and wife and possibly the more mature children, may be another language. It may be a third language, common to husband and wife, or it may be a pidgin. One or more of these languages may eventually become the child's primary language. The child may adopt a wider community language, speaking, perhaps, a vernacular language at home, but being unconsciously involved in the creolisation of a pidgin for wider use. The primary language is finally the language which the person uses for most communicative purposes.

In this context, the term 'first language' is ambiguous as it could mean the language which is first learnt or the language which is first in importance. The term 'native language' is also ambiguous because, in the long run, it means the language to which someone is born, an imprecise concept in multilingual situations. In fact, it has not been particularly helpful to have the term native linked with creole because a pidgin, in such circumstances, can be a native language.

... first language pidgin speakers may not come to speak a significantly elaborated 'creolized' pidgin but may grow up as bilinguals in a situation where the pidgin is used in a diglossic situation with another language. Bilingualism and multilingualism are the normal rather than the exceptional context ... (Mühlhäusler 1980:21)

Creolisation, therefore, does not occur every time a child grows up speaking a pidgin as his or her first language or, more correctly, as one of his or her first languages. In multilingual contexts, communicative need can be fulfilled by a number of languages of which a pidgin may be one, the multilingual speaker code-switching whenever appropriate. In fact, not only can it be argued that

not all nativised pidgins become creolised, it can also be argued, as Woolford has recently done, that a pidgin does not have to become nativised at all in order to become creolised. This challenges what has essentially been considered to be part of the definition of creoles.

The presence or absence of native speakers has long been taken as an essential part of the definition of a creole (e.g., Hall 1966), but Hymes (1971:79) casts doubt on the assumption that native speakers are necessary for creolization to occur: "A koine or a standard language may expand and become stabilized through the interaction of adults without being learned as such by children; why not a pidgin?" Sankoff (1979) also questions the role of native speakers in creolization on the basis of the fact that in Papua New Guinea, where native speakers comprise at least one percent of the speakers of Tok Pisin, the language has only partially creolized, and it is not at all clear that it is these children that are doing the creolization (Sankoff and Laberge 1973). Since native speakers of a pidgin are generally an automatic by-product of a community in which a pidgin is used as the primary language, the correlation between native speakers and creoles may well be purely incidental. (Woolford 1983:5)

In other words, creolisation may involve the linguistic innovation of child speakers, but it may not. What creolisation always involves, however, is the need for a primary language, the need for a language in which to carry out the majority of the communication within a group. This load can, as noted, be borne by a combination of languages appropriate for various social and/or semantic domains or the problem can be solved by the acquisition of another language. There are many circumstances, however, where a pidgin becomes the language of choice for the majority of communications between members of a stable group.

We can now look again at Bickerton's statement (1977:49) that 'creolization is first-language learning with restricted input' or what Washabaugh (1981:99) calls 'handicapped first language acquisition'. Every group of people who interact largely with each other for the majority of their activities and who therefore must communicate with each other for most purposes, need a primary language. When the group does not have a common primary language, it must acquire one. If the only common language of the group is a pidgin and if social pressure is on the pidgin to bear the communicative load, then the pidgin will be creolised — that is, it will be expanded to bear the communicative load required of it.

Where the only common language of the group is a pidgin, then the limited nature of the pidgin is one of the dimensions of the 'restricted input'. Bickerton prefers to postulate a situation where the pidgin is the only possible linguistic input, and where it is an elementary and unexpanded pidgin at that. This allows for the hypothesis that many features resulting from the expansion into the subsequent creole are due to innate universals of language. It has, however, been argued above that such rapid creolisation in such a linguistically inadequate environment may be rare or, at least, just one of the many variable situations in which pidgins creolise. Washabaugh (1981) takes up

this point, showing that features of some Caribbean creoles which might have been thought to be attributable to universal grammar, are derived, in fact, from the substrate language of the original pidgin.

Many writers have held that creolisation always takes place rapidly. Hymes (1971), Mintz (1971) and Ferraz (1983) all claim that creolisation can occur within fifty years or fewer (Woolford, 1983:7). All these writers were concentrating on the kind of circumstance which, yet again, is typified by plantation slavery where a sudden break in language usefulness and continuity demands that a new primary language be developed within a generation. That is why Bickerton is anxious to restrict the notion of creolisation to its most rapid occurrences, when a generation of children, lacking a primary language, is rapidly born into a situation of ineffective language mix. As noted above, however, this is not necessarily typical of all parts of the world. Woolford (1983:9) discusses Tok Pisin as a counter to the claims of rapid creolisation.

There is evidence that under ideal social conditions, creolization takes place extremely rapidly ... Nevertheless, there are pidgins such as the Papua New Guinean pidgin, Tok Pisin, that are neither pidgin nor creole, but something in between. The rate at which Tok Pisin is creolizing appears to correlate with the degree to which there is a closed community using pidgin for a majority of its communicative needs. A few isolated communities use Tok Pisin almost exclusively for one reason or another, and in these the language has been creolized to a far greater extent than is found elsewhere. In contrast, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea there are many villages in which only a very small percentage of the people speak Tok Pisin, and it is virtually never used except with strangers or on trips to market in town. The pidgin of these villages is much less elaborated than that found in other areas. (Woolford 1983:7)

It is possible that two different time-scales are being confused here and, again, definitional controversy rears its ubiquitous head. Woolford appears to be arguing that once a pidgin starts to expand to fill some communicative need, the process of creolisation has commenced. If, however, we adopt the approach of Mühlhäusler and others, then at any point on the continuum from jargon to stable expanded pidgin (Mühlhäusler 1979:44) a pidgin is still a pidgin. That is, processes of expansion can occur to enable a pidgin to be used for additional purposes, but it remains a pidgin while its functions are restricted. From this perspective, the process of creolisation does not commence until a demand is placed upon that pidgin, be it at a near-jargon stage or at a stable, expanded stage, to fulfil the functions of a primary language. In any or all of these situations, creolisation can occur rapidly if one defines creolisation as the expansion from pidgin to primary language. In fact, it seems likely that creolisation, in this sense, mostly occurs rapidly — that is, the actual step from pidgin to creole is often rapid.

This is not to deny Woolford's analysis of the slow expansion of Tok Pisin and of the problems encountered when the same name labels a creole language which is the primary language of a group and, elsewhere, labels a pidgin which is still being used as a pidgin and which is historically the same pidgin which has elsewhere creolised. It may well be that there are places where pidgins

have slowly, even imperceptibly expanded over a long period of time and have equally imperceptibly, assumed the role of primary language. Tok Pisin may well, in some parts of Papua New Guinea, have done just that.

As Hymes (1971:28) claims, a pidgin will remain a pidgin as long as social conditions remain the same. Social conditions can change slowly and languages can change slowly to accommodate them. On the other hand, social conditions can change quickly. It is highly likely that in many parts of the world where pidgins have arisen and where the change from a jargon to a stabilised or expanded pidgin may have taken place slowly, the change from pidgin to creole has taken place rapidly.

It is, as noted above, a matter of definition, but it is not just a matter of definition. There is such a thing as the creation of a primary language out of a language as yet inadequate to fulfil the demands of a primary language. This surely qualifies as 'first language learning with restricted input'. We can, as Bickerton has done, select the most optimal example of this definition and study it and learn a great deal by being able to avoid many of the complicating variables. We can, on the other hand, look at the change from pidgin to creole in all those other places where the complicating variables are part of the context. Those situations also have much to contribute both to an understanding of human language and language acquisition in general and of creolisation in particular.

The process of expansion

The third defining feature of a creole was said to be that in developing from a pidgin into a primary language, the pidgin underwent formal and functional expansion — that is, it became structurally and semantically more complex. This is, in some ways, more a linguistic than a sociolinguistic matter but an understanding of the process of creolisation is incomplete without some consideration of it. This study is concerned more with answering the question of why creoles develop in the first place than in studying in detail those linguistic parameters by which that development can be judged to have taken place and so this feature of creolisation will be discussed more briefly. The best way to begin is with a statement, in general descriptive linguistic terms, of what the process of expansion is generally taken to mean:

Originally, by very definition, all pidgins were restricted with regard to user and use. In the early stages they would have had small vocabularies and few syntactic rules; they would have been capable of dealing with only a limited range of subjects, with commands, yes/no questions, and with the simplest of explanations. They would have utilized gesture to reinforce or clarify meanings and they would have proved inadequate for sustained conversation. From these origins they developed either as extended pidgins or as creoles and became capable of expressing the views and beliefs of their users, became capable of permitting intergroup communication in areas where it had not existed before, became capable of sustaining a considerable literature.
(Todd 1974:50)

Creoles are not linguistically inferior to other languages. In fact, DeCamp (1971a:13) concludes that we can never know how many of the so-called 'normal' languages of the world developed via a pidgin-creole process. Creoles, although expanded to fulfil all communicative functions, are said to be recognisable because they retain features which are typical of pidgins. These features are simplifications which are retained in the creole because their retention does not damage the expressive power of the language. As noted earlier, simplification may be an advantage over redundancy and is not the same as impoverishment. As Mühlhäusler (1980:20) points out, the absence of grammatical markedness makes a language simple in an absolute rather than a relative sense. Much of the confusion, according to Mühlhäusler stems from the widely found tendency to equate simplification with impoverishment and expansion with elaboration.

Simplification features which are said to indicate a creole ancestry in a language include such things as loss of grammatical gender and extreme simplification of inflexions. These are, for example, two of the main ways in which English differs from many of its West and North German congeners, and there is a body of literature which examines the plausible hypothesis that English has pidgin/creole roots (e.g. Bailey and Maroldt 1977; Hall et al 1977; Domingue 1977; Poussa 1982). In other words, structural simplifications in English are seen to be evidence that English did not, in fact, develop slowly from Anglo-Saxon (or Old English) and Middle English to Modern English, borrowing along the way from Latin, Scandinavian and French. English, it can be argued, did not have what Baugh (1957:58) calls 'unbroken continuity'. Domingue (1977:89) demonstrates that the linguistic facts can be interpreted quite differently to indicate that there were quite sudden linguistic innovations with results 'very much like a creole'. Poussa (1982:70) shows that the crucial loss of grammatical gender in English is exactly what happens when French is pidginised today (e.g. Reinecke 1971:51; DeCamp 1971a:21). Bailey and Maroldt (1977) put the case for what they term 'the French lineage of English' while Poussa (1982) argues that it was not so much French which was creolised during the Middle English period but Old Scandinavian during the Old English period. Even Schuchardt recognised as early as 1914 that 'English itself is much closer to creole than the Romance languages' (Gilbert 1980:10).

Following this line of research, it can be shown that 'there must be many more creoles around than we think' (Domingue 1977:90). It has been suggested that the whole Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, which includes English, German and Dutch, started out as a pidginised version of Indo-European (Aitchison 1981:206). If, as Domingue (1977:97) argues, Middle English was a creole which developed from a pidgin under special social circumstances, then

(it) can then be argued that pidginization and subsequent creolization may be much more common than usually held. They may be widely spread processes in the history of languages: Hall (1973) hints at such an origin for French and Southworth (1971) shows that Marathi's beginnings can be related to such phenomena. Proto-Germanic could be considered as a creole language, as could Proto-Armenian and Proto-Albanian. Processes of pidginization and creolization can explain better than borrowing or areal influence the rationale behind the wave model for a classification of Indo-European. It might also well be

that genetic classifications based on lexico-phonological correspondences are not only too rigid, but misleading, hiding facts of pidginization/creolization, because they do not take syntactic features into consideration. Such speculations strip pidgins and creoles of their status of 'special' languages and regard them as normal, though not necessary, steps in the formation of languages.
(Domingue 1977:97)

What has happened, of course, is that the upsurge of interest and research into known pidgins and creoles in the 1970s has influenced traditional historical linguistic thinking (Poussa 1982:67). A new set of instruments can now be used to endeavour to shed further light on historical linguistic problems. It is proving valuable but there is the concomitant danger that the instrument will become too blunt to be useful – that is, creoles will be found everywhere. As Mühlhäusler (1980:20) suggests, it is not particularly helpful to do as Bailey (1974:88) has done and define all forms of language mixing as creoles. Platt (1975, 1978) suggests a way out of the dilemma by calling creole-like languages which show some creole features 'creoloids', but this does not remove the problem of where to draw the line between what is a creole and what is not. As noted a number of times already, Bickerton (1981:3) prefers to solve the problem by restricting the definition of creoles only to those languages in which normal language transmission has been most severely disrupted. Even in this case, however, once one moves beyond the archetypical example – in this case, Hawaii – the choice is still subjective. Perhaps it always will be. For the purposes of this study we will continue to adopt the view most clearly stated by Mühlhäusler (1980:21) that a creole is formed when, under the pressure of need for a primary language, a pidgin is expanded (creolised) to fill that need.

What is the nature of that expansion? The obvious first response is that at the very least it involves lexical expansion (Hancock 1980; Allsopp 1980). When one compares the lexicon of a creole with the lexicon of the pidgin from which it was derived, the lexicon is seen to be much larger. As the pidgin, during its creolisation, assumes an increasing number of communicative tasks, it must gain an increasing number of words in the new semantic domains with which it has to cope. Gilman (1979:178) refers to four processes of vocabulary change: coining, semantic shift, semantic extension and borrowing.²³ DeCamp (1980), discussing Gilman, lists twelve categories of what he terms 'lexical progression' (p.68). They will not be detailed here as, in the final analysis, they only expand Gilman's list by splitting some of his categories into sub-categories. For example, DeCamp (1980:68-74) distinguishes between spontaneous coining with no external model, incoining or blending by combining morphemes existing in the language and reduplication, the blending of the same morpheme. They are interesting distinctions, but they are still 'coining'.

Allsopp (1980) discussing Hancock (1980) adds six more processes which he sees as operating in the expansion of creole lexicons in addition to the twelve nominated by Hancock. Again, they are subcategories or special combinations of the others. One, emphasised by both Hancock (1980:80) and Allsopp (1980:90), which merits an explanation in this otherwise brief summary, is 'calquing'. This is a special case of both incoining and borrowing. It is a semantic borrowing, often from a substrate language, the word being created by incoining semantically similar morphemes, ultimately from the superstrate language, but

often at the time from the pidgin itself. For example the word *big-ai* (big eye) for *greedy* independently arose in Caribbean creoles because that figure of speech was common in the African substrate languages.

Lexical extension is not the only kind of expansion which takes place as the creolising system increases in structural complexity to bear the increased functional load required of it. Mühlhäusler (1980:22) defines that expansion in structural complexity as 'an increase in overall referential and non-referential power of a language'. Mühlhäusler contrasts expansion with restructuring, which involves changes due to contact with other languages which do not affect the overall power of a language. Creoles develop what is technically redundancy – that is, they develop more ways of saying the same thing. Labov was probably the first to note that certain grammatical developments were not necessarily referential, which means that they do not necessarily allow ideas to be expressed more clearly.

In tracing the development of tense so far, it appears that the essence is a stylistic one. There is no basis for arguing that tense markers express the concept of temporal relations more clearly than adverbs of time ... The most important property which tense markers possess, which adverbs of time do not, is their stylistic flexibility (Labov 1971:70).

So essentially, creolisation implies two basic types of expansion: referential expansion, which is an increase in the number of things which can be said, and non-referential expansion, which is an increase in the number of ways in which something can be said.

As Mühlhäusler (1980:33) points out, there are three major sources of structural expansion, the substrate language, the superstrate language, and universal or innate grammar. As shown in Figure 6 (page 53) creoles can be said to arise, broadly speaking, from a jargon, from a stabilised pidgin or from an expanded pidgin. Of these three 'types' of creole, creolised jargons will depend mostly on universals which is the logic behind Bickerton's isolation of them as archetypical creoles. While also drawing on universal grammar, creoles in their process of development from stabilised and expanded pidgins can also draw heavily on substrate and superstrate languages (Mühlhäusler 1980:33).

Conclusions

The three-point definition of a creole with which this discussion commenced continues to be a suitable definition. It has its detractors, but how could things be otherwise in a field whose object of study is dynamic and perpetually changing? A creole is a language which develops by the expansion of a pidgin when a demand is placed upon that pidgin to become the primary language of a speech community.

Creolisation is therefore, as Bickerton (1977:49) says, first or primary language learning but, as he also points out, it is primary language learning under restricted conditions or, as he puts it 'with restricted input'.

It is here that there is a major point of departure in the conditions surrounding the creation of a pidgin and those surrounding the creation of a creole. The former is second language learning with restricted input, while

the latter is first language learning with restricted input. This pair of definitions gives an inaccurate impression that 'restricted input' refers to some constant set of input conditions which pertain both to pidgins and to creoles. This is not so. The phrase 'restricted input' refers to two quite different sets of conditions.

As shown in Chapter 2, the input in the creation of a pidgin is restricted because access to the model language is restricted. The model language is there, it may even be spoken, but access to it is limited. The pidgin creators have, for a whole variety of possible reasons, restricted opportunities to hear it, so what they produce is a pidginised version of the model language.

On the other hand, the input into the creation of a creole is limited because there is no model language. It is not a problem of access, but a problem inherent in the raw materials themselves. It is the raw materials which are inadequate. The pidgin is inadequate because it has only the power to fill limited communicative functions. In Bickerton's archetypical case, an early pidgin is all there is, and the creole creators must expand the limited raw materials in accordance with their own innate universal grammars. In most other circumstances there are other bits and pieces of raw material around. There may be some of the superstrate language available if the superstrate speakers are still about at the time of creole creation. There may be some of the substrate languages around. The generation of pidgin creators may still be about and may even speak the substrate language among themselves, or the creole creators may have memories of how they heard it spoken.

These and many other analogous circumstances mean that various raw materials may contribute to the creation of a creole, but the major raw material is the pidgin, which must undergo expansion in order to fulfil all the functions of the primary language of a community.

The historical data, which will now be presented in Chapters 4 to 8, will provide as full as possible a sociohistorical account of conditions, culture contact and language usage during the relatively recent era of foreign contact with the Aboriginal people of the north coast of Australia. In particular, Chapter 8 will describe the conditions under which an English-based pidgin was creolised to become what is today known as Kriol. In Chapters 9 to 12, the theoretical matters raised in this chapter and the historical background of Chapters 4 to 8, will be brought together and discussed.

SECTION II

THE PRE-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND AND THE 'MACASSAN' PIDGIN

This Section describes the pre-European language contact background of coastal north Australia. Particular emphasis is given to the relationship between the coastal Aboriginal speech communities and South-east Asia and the 'Macassan' Pidgin.

CHAPTER 4: ABORIGINAL SPEECH COMMUNITIES AND
PRE-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE CONTACT IN
COASTAL NORTH AUSTRALIA (page 69)

CHAPTER 4

ABORIGINAL SPEECH COMMUNITIES AND PRE-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE CONTACT IN COASTAL NORTH AUSTRALIA

There are several reasons for including pre-European language contact in a study which essentially concerns the linguistic consequences of contact with English. The first is simply to provide an historical linguistic background to the coming of the English language, to show that it did not come into a pristine situation of societal monolingualism but into a cultural region in which there had already been developed skills of cross-cultural communication. The second reason is to demonstrate the multilingual nature of the Aboriginal speech communities of the northern coasts, a factor which is being increasingly thought to have some importance when one is considering the acquisition of yet another language.

The third reason is more theoretical. It is fortuitous that the study of the rise of Pidgin English can follow a study of the rise of the 'Macassan' Pidgin of pre-European trade contact. Thus, in seeking universal trends and patterns in the origins of pidgins, the temptation to base these merely on one English-based pidgin is avoided. Any generalisations which may appear to arise from Pidgin English can be checked against the earlier 'Macassan' Pidgin.

In coastal North Australia, the English-speaking Europeans were the new set of foreigners whereas there had already been centuries of maritime trade with associated linguistic innovations. Furthermore, multilingualism had long been a fact of life for Aboriginal people in North Australia. This chapter will therefore consider the historical linguistic background of the region prior to the arrival of English speakers. It will first consider briefly the multilingual nature of Aboriginal speech communities of coastal North Australia and after surveying the evidence for early contacts with foreign visitors, it will consider in depth the linguistic consequences of the long trading relationship with what is now Indonesia.

Language complexity in the northern region of the Northern Territory and the concept of the speech community

During the long history of the northern coastal and hinterland regions of what is now the Northern Territory, a large number of distinct languages emerged. This fact is the basis of a number of Aboriginal legends which seek to explain language diversity. According to one of these Aboriginal legends, the Earth Mother simultaneously created people and their languages and allocated each a specific place. The earliest reference in the literature appears to be Spencer's record (1914:277-278) of the Kakadu tradition of Western Arnhem Land in which *Imberombera* travelled throughout the ancestral lands, sending out various spirit children to inhabit different parts of the country and telling them to speak different languages. Her instructions to the first Kakadu people, for example, were

Kakadu ngeinyimma tjikaru gnoro Munganillida.
Your language is Kakadu. Go to Munganillida.
 (Spencer 1914:248)²⁴

This tradition is evidence of an aspect of Aboriginal life which was as true before the first Europeans came as it is today — the existence of a variety of languages and the necessity to seek ways of communicating across them. It is, however, false to regard these languages as having distinct boundaries which define the limits to communication. The number of speech communities is much smaller than the number of languages in the region.

Many theorists have endeavoured to map linguistic boundaries as if they were coterminous with tribal or land-holding or other boundaries. Probably the most noteworthy attempt to superimpose the concept of the dialectal tribe onto the complex reality of Aboriginal society was Tindale (1974). In this work, he defines the tribe as

the normally endogamous unit most commonly recognised in Australia, generally known as occupying a given territory, speaking mutually intelligible dialects, having a common kinship system, and sharing the performance of ceremonial rites of interest to them all. (Tindale 1974:32)

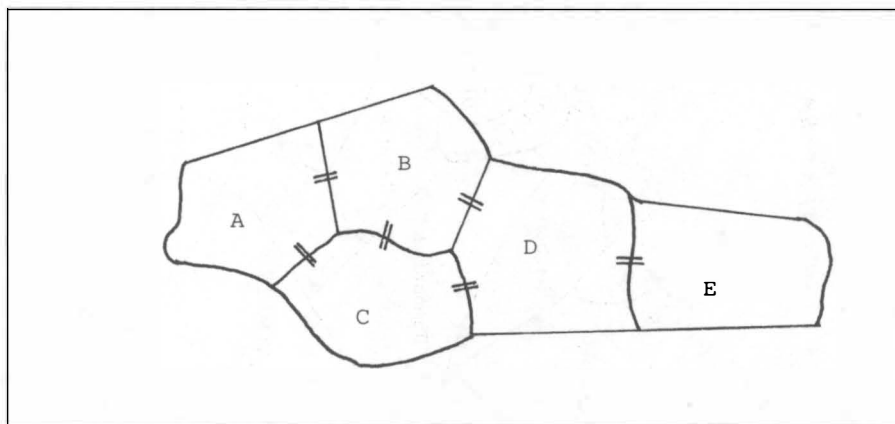
A map based on the northern portion of Tindale's map is reproduced as Map 2 on page 72.

Tindale's map is not without merit. In a general sense it answers questions such as how many Aboriginal languages are there, what languages are spoken in a particular region, where is language X spoken and so on, all of which are questions which need to be answered in a generalised fashion from time to time. The map, however, is misleading as it gives the impression of discrete language communities each having distinct territorial affiliations. Reality is otherwise.

Another attempt to describe the language situation in Australia is the concept of the 'dialect chain' in which series or chains of dialects are said to extend hundreds of kilometres, each mutually intelligible with its neighbours so that it is impossible to draw firm language

boundaries. One of the more recent supporters of the dialect chain as a general description of relationships between Australian languages is Yallop (1982:27-28) who, in attempting to illustrate the concept, ends up having to draw firm lines.

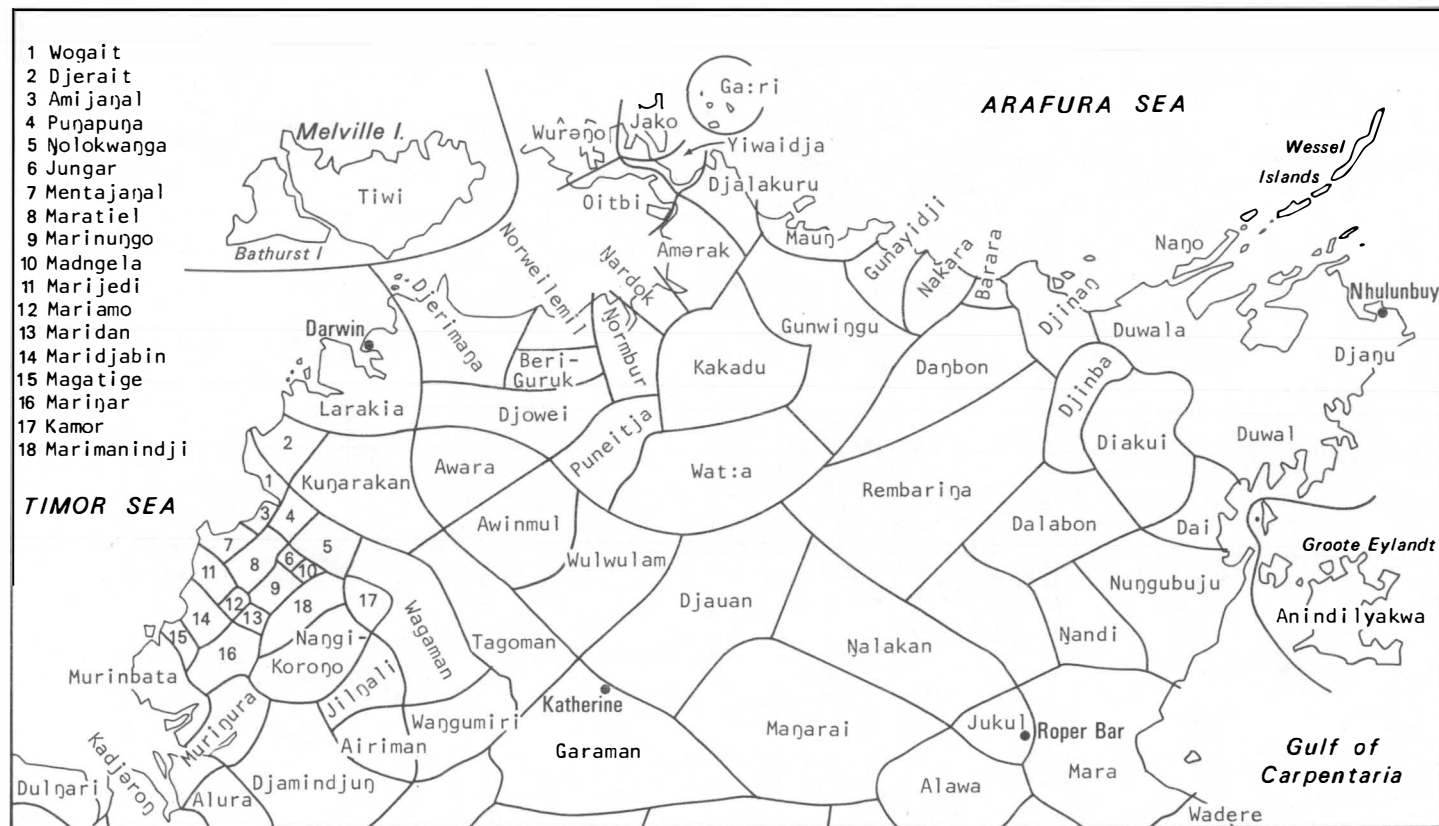
Yallop's diagram is reproduced below. The letters are said to represent 'tribes' such that tribes A, B and C can understand each other's speech as can tribes B, C and D while perhaps A and D cannot.



= links tribes who understand each other's speech

Figure 7: Yallop's stylised diagram of a dialect chain (1982:28)

Dixon (1980:37), however, in discussing the concept of dialect chains claims that it is 'a relatively easy matter' to decide whether a particular tribal boundary is a boundary between different languages or dialects. Dixon thus appears to support the concept of the dialectal tribe. It is certainly true that Aboriginal people perceive relationships between land and language. A traditional story relating them to each other was recounted above. The question, however, is what do Tindale's lines or even Yallop's lines contain? Does a line enclose all the speakers of language A or all the members of 'tribe X' who speak language A or all the people who speak language A as their first language, or does it contain all the land which the members of 'tribe X' (who speak language A) own, or what? In other words, in practice, the construct of the dialectal tribe coterminous with some mappable land-holding group, is inadequate to describe reality. This has recently been shown very clearly by Rigsby and Sutton (1982:19) who found that in Cape York the linking of language and tribal boundaries was not easy at all.



Map 2: Northern Portion of Tindale's map of tribal boundaries (simplified and redrawn)

If we take a map of the Cape Keerweer region and mark on it the tracts of land claimed as 'own country' by the various Aboriginal families who come from there, and then we superimpose the names of the varieties claimed as 'own language' by the same families, we obtain a picture which, to most dialectologists, looks like a real mess.

Language reality is much better described in terms of the concept of the 'speech community' when referring to that group of people who interact by means of speech. This definition was the second of two used by Bloomfield (1933:42) and more recently explicated further by Silverstein (1972a). The 'speech community' is the most appropriate term for the interconnected language groups here being considered. The speech community is highly unlikely to be coterminous with the land-holding group or any other territorial group.²⁵ In this sense, the term 'speech community' is distinct from and subsumes the term 'language community' (Rigsby and Sutton 1982:10). A language community could be described as a group of people who speak the same language, but even that generalisation demands further definition. Silverstein (1972a:7) regards intention to speak the same language as the most important factor in defining a language community as a group of people who believe that they speak the same language. Where this belief obtains, shared grammar will also obtain. In most parts of the world, language communities exist as part of a larger unit, a speech community, consisting of people who interact by means of speech but who do not necessarily share the same grammar or the intent to speak the same language as all other members of the community.

Speech communities consisting of large numbers of interlocking and overlapping language communities are typical of Aboriginal Australia and nowhere are they more typical than in those areas where favourable and diverse natural environments are able to support large numbers of people organised into small groups (White 1978:48). It is precisely this aspect of reality which maps like Tindale's (Map 2) fail to portray. Given the limitations of mapping, the attempt by Milliken (1976)²⁶ to depict the distribution of speakers of various Northern Territory languages gives a much better visual impression of how complex reality is. The section of Milliken's map showing the northern region of the Northern Territory is reproduced in Map 3 while the languages and their abbreviations are listed in Table 3. Milliken made no attempt to distinguish between language and dialect, a problem which is, in any case, difficult to resolve. Indeed, for the present discussion, it is more convincing to have a map which depicts what Aboriginal people perceive as their language, irrespective of what linguists might say about language and dialect. It serves to emphasise the linguistic complexity of the inter-related speech communities of the region. Despite its shortcomings Milliken's map at least visually destroys Tindale's neat compartments each containing a dialectal tribe and succeeds in showing, instead, the complex network of interlocking language communities.

Map 3: Milliken's map of distribution of speakers of Aboriginal languages (Northern Portion)
Reprinted from *Tribes and boundaries in Australia* edited by Nicolas Peterson with the
permission of the publishers The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Table 3: Aboriginal languages and dialects in the northern section of the Northern Territory (adapted from Milliken 1976:241-242) (Milliken's original spellings are retained.)

Ad Andiliaugwa	Gv Gunavidji	Mw Mariwuda
Al Alawa	Gw Gurgawurda	Mx Minaji
Ba Burara Anbara	Gx Gunjedmi	My Moil
Bd Birdangal	Gz Gudanji	Nb Ngalkbun
Bg Burara Gunardba	Hb Gunbiri	Nd Ngandi
Bi Birgili	Iw Iwaitja	Nk Nakara
Bj Bajimurungu	Ja Jauan	Nl Ngainmil
Bk Burara Mukali	Jb Jabu	Nm Ngaringman
Bl Balamumu	Jg Jinang	Nn Nalakan
Bm Burara Madai	Jj Jaminjung	No Nangiomiri
Br Burara Maringa	Jl Jingili	Nr Ngarr
Bu Burara	Jm Jambarwingu	Ny Nunggubuyu
By Buyuyugululmir	Ju Jugul	Re Rembarrnga
Bz Brinkin	Jw Jalwa	Ri Ritarrngu
Da Dangu	Ka Karama	Rr Riraidjingu
Db Dabi	Li Liagalawumiri	Ti Tiwi
Dd Dadiwui	Lm Lamumiri	Ul Ulaki
Dl Dayi	Lr Larakia	Wa Wagalag
Dn Dangbon	Ma Mara	Wd Wadidi
Du Duala	Mb Manjibai	We Wanguri
Dw Dalwangu	Mc Maragula	Wk Wandarang
Ga Gagadju	Md Manda	Wl Walang
Gb Gurambagurambu	Me Menngarr	Wn Wagaman
Gd Gadjarang	Mf Mangalili	Wp Wubulgara
Ge Gungorogone	Mg Maranunggu	Wr Walgara
Gg Gunwinggu	Mh Maramanadji	Wt Wagait
Gh Gulamala	Mi Maiali	Wx Waramiri
Gj Gumaidj	Mj Mangaridj	Wy Wadjiginy
Gk Gumauwurrk	Mk Marrgu	Wz Warai
Gl Galbu	Mm Malak Malak	Ym Yangman
Gm Gubu Maliri	Mo Maung	Yn Yanangu
Gn Ganalbwingu	Mq Marangu	Zt Munyugu
Gp Gupabwingu	Mr Mangarai	Zx Mudbra
Gt Gwijamil	Mu Mandalbu	ZZ Murrngin

What, then, is language reality from the point of view of an Aboriginal person at Yirrkala or Maningrida or Numbulwar? Rigsby and Sutton answered this question with respect to the Cape Keerweer region of Cape York, and what they said could readily be transposed to this part of the Northern Territory.

How do people cope with so many languages spoken around them? They do not simply acquire hearing knowledge of other languages and go on speaking only in their own. Most people are active

multilinguals, although modern conditions may alter this in the future. Their multilingualism is limited to a subset of the languages with which they have contact. Comprehension, however, does exceed use in speaking. In view of the high degree of mutual exposure among the linguistic varieties of the region, and assuming that it has existed over a long period (there is much evidence for this), we conclude that the linguistic varieties have maintained their distinctiveness during the course of sustained dense contact. There is evidence that both diffusion and continuing divergence have taken place simultaneously.

The acquisition of multilingual competence has been a normal part of every child's socialisation among Cape Keerweer people since time immemorial. It is not at present a result of the need to bridge the communicative gap between isolated trading partners, nor is it a means of enabling communication between socially, rather than geographically separate groups, for all the socially significant groups other than the exogamous clans are polyglot both by affiliation and by competence. The use of more than one language is, rather, part of an elaborate speech etiquette ... It involves not only the use of different languages (i.e. code switching) but also the use of different registers of the same languages.

Whatever its origin, the present complex and somewhat random relationship between social and residential groupings and language ownership in the region has probably been long established. (Rigsby and Sutton 1982:19-20)

The same language complexity characterises coastal Northern Territory and the nearby associated inland regions of the Top End (Brandl and Walsh 1982:73). This multilingualism is well embedded in Aboriginal legend and world view and has almost certainly, therefore, characterised Aboriginal speech communities for a very long time.

The region has no doubt been settled on more than one occasion. The Aboriginal people of the Arnhem Land coast generally believe that their ancestors came from across the sea. Numerous 'origin' legends record progenitors coming from the sea and populating the country with both human and animal forms (Kirk and Thorne 1976:1). Perhaps these people were the dingo-bringing migrants who may have arrived as recently as 4,000 years ago²⁷, but this is something which it may never be possible to know. The ancient founders of Aboriginal society have long ago passed from history into mythology, their exploits part of the ancestral Dreaming period during which they, the great Spirit Beings of song and legend, walked the earth and established the order of the universe, of landform and of living things and human social order and language.

At some point in time, the speech communities, as discussed earlier in this chapter, became stabilised and the necessity to know and use many linguistic codes became an integral part of Aboriginal life. The consequence of this demand was the emergence of the pattern of interlocking, multilingual speech communities which have long been an essential feature of human life in the Northern Territory.

The first visitors

With this background we can now turn to the main subject of this chapter, the establishment of non-European-based pidgins prior to European settlement of the region. The obvious major recent example was the 'Macassan' trade pidgin, the development of which will be discussed in detail. Before doing so there remains an intriguing question to be asked. Had these multilingual speech communities already grappled with the problem of communication with linguistically diverse visitors before their historically documented dealings with the 'Macassans'?

Historians, anthropologists, and linguists alike are interested in who the first non-Aboriginal visitors to North Australian shores may have been. The likelihood of such visits is strong; indeed it would be more surprising if there had been none. The first possibility is that of unintentional accidental visits by sailing vessels blown off course. Mulvaney (1969:20-21) makes this point.

Northern Australia firmly straddles the monsoonal belt, which for several months brings the moisture laden winds of the northwest monsoon from Island South-East Asia. Even today, lost or disabled Indonesian fishing craft are blown ashore in Arnhem Land, while remote beaches are strewn with coconut husks, sawn lengths of bamboo and other intrusive flotsam.

George Windsor Earl, a visitor to the islands east of Timor and only 300 miles from Australia, observed of their seafaring inhabitants around 1840, that nearly every village mourned the loss of praus blown to the south-east. Writing around 1600, Manuel Godinho De Eredia, recorded several examples of Portuguese and native craft and one Chinese junk, being blown to the south of various Indonesian islands by the monsoonal winds.²⁸

Just as these north-west monsoons facilitated (or even forced) the outward journey, so the south-east trade winds some months later made the return journey possible — the technique which, once mastered, made the 'Macassan' trade link possible. This possibility may have been accidentally discovered more than once but it is a reasonable speculation that non-European explorers, consciously seeking new lands, may have discovered North Australia long before the Europeans. Speculation as to who they may have been would be less relevant if it were not for the fact that Aboriginal historical traditions in North Eastern Arnhem Land could demand just such an interpretation.

Undoubtedly, the claim for the earliest visitors must be that by the Chinese scholar, Wei Chu-Hsien, whom Mulvaney cites (1969:30). According to this speculation, some of the calculations given by Confucius in his *Spring and Autumn Annals* were based on observations made during the years 592 and 593 B.C. by Chinese astronomers in Australia. A thousand years later, in the sixth century A.D., the Chinese were active in many parts of Southeast Asia including India, Ceylon, Borneo and the Philippines (S. Wang 1978:2) and became increasingly prominent as time progressed. Some credence can be given to the possibility that the Chinese visited Northern Australia early in the fifteenth century as part of the seven famous voyages of Ch'eng Ho (S. Wang 1978:3).

Between 1405 and 1433 his huge fleet of junks made the Ming Dynasty known throughout Western Indonesia and even in distant East Africa. Units of his fleet explored Timorese waters, less than 400 miles from Australia. It may not be unduly fanciful to suggest that Ch'eng Ho ordered exploration beyond Timor, or that his probing junks were blown off course and beached in Australia. It is also relevant that Chinese settled in Javanese seaports during the fourteenth century, while the stands of sandalwood in Timor's forests were known to them at least a century before Ch'eng Ho directed his junks there. Writing in 1613 of an earlier episode, Eredia reported that a Chinese junk from Macao, laden with Timorese sandalwood, was blown south of Timor. It reached a safe haven on an unknown island ... (Mulvaney 1969:30-31)

There have been some archaeological finds in North Australia which are of Chinese origin. Most of these can be explained by the fact that mainland Asian ceramics are known to have reached Northern Australia through Macassan trade and through the early nineteenth century British military settlements (Mulvaney 1969:33; Macknight 1976:80).

Nevertheless, there has been considerable speculation regarding a Chinese carving of the Taoist immortal, Shou Lao, found during road-building operations in Darwin in 1879, firmly wedged 1.3 metres below the surface among the roots of a large banyan tree (Bauer 1964:23). The most sceptical of the positions adopted with regard to this piece is that the find was faked by the Chinese workmen who were excavating the site at the time. If this were so, it seems strange that there is no indication that the finders ever tried to profit from the discovery. A more likely explanation is that it was brought by the 'Macassans'. Although there is no record of 'Macassan' trepanning in Port Darwin itself, the object could have been bartered from Aboriginal people who were in touch with the 'Macassans'. On the other hand, as Mulvaney (1969:32) points out, Wei Chu-Hsien claims that the figurine was a sacrificial offering made by Ch'eng Ho in person in 1432.²⁹ Fitzgerald (1953:75-78) investigated the figurine fairly thoroughly and his conclusions were summarised by Bauer (1964:23)³⁰

The figurine was found during road-building operations near Doctor's Gully, Darwin, and was entwined about the roots of a large banyan tree. Professor C.P. Fitzgerald has investigated the matter exhaustively, but does not claim that (1) the figurine was actually brought by Chinese or (2) it reached Australia in a period contemporaneous with its manufacture. What it shows most clearly is that some people with access to such an item of Chinese art probably visited northern Australia before European contact. For that matter, the banyan tree itself is evidence of the same sort, for it is not indigenous to Australia.

Archives in China itself may yet yield less speculative information. It was certainly known as early as 1820 that the Chinese had a name for the coasts of North Australia. They called it *Lam-hai* (Crawfurd 1820[III]:441).



Map 4: The South-east Asian Archipelago

A second group who may have been the earliest foreign visitors to northern Australia is the Arabs. At least as early as the fourteenth century, Moslem merchants had established themselves in Malaysia and Sumatra (Whinnom 1956:5). They rapidly spread eastward and southward. Mulvaney (1969:83) refers to a Portuguese chronicler, Tome Pires, who wrote around 1515. Pires noted that 'Moorish merchants' preceded the Portuguese by thirty years, at the prosperous spice-trading centre of Banda, 500 miles north of Australia and that Islam had come to the Moluccas even earlier. Pires admitted that much of his knowledge of the eastern seas he had learnt from the 'Moors' and particularly from their charts which he had often studied. The Moslem seafarers were still trading in the seaports when the Spanish navigator, Torres, was in the area in 1606. As Mulvaney (1969:34) points out, the Arabs were capable navigators and as they had visited islands as close to Australia as Aru, only 300 miles away, it would be surprising if curiosity, trade or the vagaries of a monsoon had not brought them to Australia's northern coast during their centuries of mercantile activities in the region.

Yet another contender for early visits to the north coast of Australia, were the Gujerati, the Indian sea-rovers of Gujerat. Halls (1965) speculates on this possibility, describing how the Gujerati seamen, sailing from ports in the Gulf of Camboy on the west coast of India, voyaged as far afield as East Africa and China. It is of particular interest that they were among the earliest traders in the South-east Asian region, their first voyages to Java being as early as 75 A.D. In 603 A.D., a large fleet of Gujerati colonists arrived on Java's west coast where they built a city called Mendang Kumulan. They initiated extensive commerce between Java and Gujerat and spread right throughout the whole archipelago (Halls 1965:5).

As the historically proven 'Macassan' contact with north Australia shows, there is no particular reason why the earliest visitors should necessarily have come from outside the Indonesian region. Misadventure still brings seamen to Australian beaches from such nearby places as the arc of the Lesser Sunda group. The Northern Territory Museum in Darwin holds a sailing canoe from the Tanimbar Islands (Indonesia) which was blown off course to the Northern Territory coast in 1968. It carried eight men and women, one of whom gave birth during the voyage. Mulvaney (1969:24, 34) and Spate (1957:7) refer to descriptions of the region by Emanuel Godinho de Eredia in 1613. Eredia records various occasions on which vessels sailed south from Flores, Timor, Solor, Roti and other islands. One of the more thought provoking of such incidents was the voyage of Chiaymasouro, a ruler of south-eastern Java in 1600, who voyaged 500 miles to the south of Java for twelve days and reached a fabulous land. The intriguing detail is that when the southerly monsoon winds set in, Chiaymasiouro started back for his own country, arriving home in 1601 (Mulvaney 1969:24).

The only group actually known to European historians to have visited the Northern coasts who could be said to be distinct from the 'Macassans' were the Bajau, a seafaring people variously described by romantics as 'sea-gypsies' and by their detractors as 'sea pirates'.

Bajau ... is one of the most frequent of several names given to wandering maritime Malays, of gipsy manners, and from whose questionable habits, the word has become a synonym for pirate ... All speak the Malay language, although rude and various dialects of it.

Bajaus are found on most of the coasts of the islands of the archipelago, from Sumatra to New Guinea and the Moluccas; their fishing voyages occasionally extending even to the northern coast of Australia. (Crawfurd 1856: 26-27)

Earl recorded that some of them visited Port Essington in 1840, noting the presence of

... a vessel belonging to that singular people the Badju, a tribe without a fixed home, living constantly on board their prahus, numbers of which congregate among the small islands near the Southern coast of Celebes. (Earl 1846:65)

According to Fox (1977:463), the Bajau formed permanent settlements on Timor early in the nineteenth century, but their activities have been noted from considerably earlier periods throughout the archipelago. Crawfurd (1856:25) noted that 'gipsy Malays' regularly visited the North Australian coast for trepang gathering. They could well have visited these waters much earlier than Earl's observation.

Of course, various European navigators are hailed as the true 'discoverers' of Australia and it still remains an open question as to whom the first Europeans were (Spate 1957:1).³¹ Given this uncertainty, the obvious proximity of South-east Asia and the relative recency of European presence in the region, it seems difficult to sustain an argument that Europeans could have preceded Asians in North Australian waters.

There is a tremendous gap in our knowledge here. After all, for centuries Arabs, Chinese and Malays had been sailing in the seas of Insulinidia: it seems scarcely possible that they never sighted Australia ... (Spate 1957:19).

An Aboriginal perspective on the first visitors

It would seem strange, given all the possibilities outlined above, if there had not been early seafaring visitors to north Australian shores. One day, perhaps, archaeological, historical, and linguistic evidence may combine to provide more definite answers. In this context, it is thought-provoking that Aboriginal people of North-eastern Arnhem Land believe that there were early visitors who came to them from the west (Capell 1965:68) and with whom they had extended contact prior to the historically documented era of the 'Macassan' trade. These visitors were the *Bayini*.³² A number of anthropologists, notably R. and C. Berndt (1954), believe that the songs, stories and paintings of the *Bayini* demand just such an interpretation. The Aboriginal people of North-eastern Arnhem Land still tell today of the golden-skinned *Bayini* and

... of the ships in which these people arrived, and the women who came with them, the stone dwellings they built on the Australian mainland; the cloth that they wove and dyed; the clothes they wore, and the way in which they speared fish and cultivated small gardens.
(R. and C. Berndt 1954:15)

In the view of Aboriginal people of North-eastern Arnhem Land, the *Bayini* era bridges the gap between the remote ancestral era when Aboriginal society was established and the recent 'Macassan trade' era. Thus, at one end of the era, the great Ancestral Being, *Djankawu* (*Djanggawul*) himself is said to have met the *Bayini* (R. and C. Berndt 1954:33; Isaacs 1980:253) while at the other end of the era, it is said that they sailed away to Macassar (Halls 1965:4) and that the first 'Macassans' were thought at first to be *Bayini* returning (R. and C. Berndt 1954:41).

In the literature, opinion as to the origin of the *Bayini* is divided (Capell 1965:68). Mountford (1956:334) proposes that their light skin may indicate that they were Europeans, perhaps Dutch or Portuguese while Worsley (1955:2) raises the possibility that they were Chinese. R. and C. Berndt (1954:34) suggest that most of the activities of the *Bayini* in the stories lead to the conclusion that they were early traders from the East Indies. Halls (1965:5) believes that their light skins, pipe smoking and distinctive clothing demonstrate that they were Gujerati who were not only known to have engaged in trepang trade with China but who also included both men and women in their many trading voyages. Macknight (1976:97), on the other hand, believes that the *Bayini* stories are not evidence of early visitors at all but rather, the transference of experiences and observations in Macassar (South Sulawesi) and elsewhere to familiar local places.³³ Macknight (1976:160 fn 48), however, stresses that this is his personal view, whereas my opinion is that the *Bayini* stories cannot so easily be discounted. The possibility that 'Macassan' information has been imposed upon some of the oral records of the *Bayini* does not entirely negate them.

It is also important that Aboriginal people believe that the *Bayini* really existed and that they are adamant that the *Bayini* were quite distinct from the 'Macassans' who followed them (R. and C. Berndt 1954:34; Mountford 1956:333).³⁴ The significance to this study is that the *Bayini* provide yet more evidence of the likelihood of a long history of language contact in coastal north Australia. Indeed, the first clear story of a communication problem between Aboriginal people and speakers of a foreign language relates to the *Bayini*.

One day, however, two aborigines who had sneaked through the mangroves to have a look at the boat and its occupants, saw several small Baijini boys gathering cockles on the beach. The men, intrigued with the light colour of the boys' skin, crept closer to get a better view, when the boys, catching sight of the aborigines, beckoned them across. The Baijini children, equally puzzled about the dark colour of the aboriginal men, felt them all over, and asked many questions, but neither group could understand the other. The Baijini children then took the aborigines by the hand, led them to a patch of jungle, and, motioning them to sit down, ran to tell their parents what had happened. Two Baijini men returned with their sons, coaxed the aborigines to their boat and gave them food. Although at first the men did not like the taste of the Baijini food, they soon became used to it. Later they stayed with the Baijini and helped them to collect trepang, bringing their wives and relatives to assist in the work. (Mountford 1956:334)

No matter how the *Bayini* stories are interpreted, they have one very clear implication for a study of the development of pidgins in coastal north Australia. The stories show that Aboriginal people themselves believe that they were already accustomed to developing strategies for communication with foreign visitors even before the 'Macassan' era began. It is to that era that we now turn.

The 'Macassans'

The long association between Aboriginal people of coastal Northern Territory and the so-called 'Macassan' fishermen-traders of South-east Asia is thoroughly documented historical fact. Indeed, it was the efforts of the government of South Australia (of which the Northern Territory was then part), to control this commercial activity which led finally to its cessation in 1907 (Macknight 1976:100-126). These fishermen-traders are variously labelled in the literature, the linguistic significance of which will be drawn out later. Even a limited literature search reveals extensive, more or less equal but inconsistent usage of the terms 'Malay' and 'Macassan' or 'Macassarese' while there are some occasional occurrences of other terms such as 'Bugis'.³⁵ A few of the more recent writers avoid the specificity of such labels by resorting to terms such as 'Indonesian' and 'East Indian'.³⁶ Smyth (1828), Campbell (1834) and Keppel (1853) are careful to distinguish between race (Malay) and the home ports of the praus (Macassar), while some writers such as Thomson (1949) and Tindale (1925) tend to use 'Malay' and 'Macassan' rather indiscriminately.

The term 'Macassan' is a convenient one to use (Macknight 1972:283; 1976:1). It is the English equivalent of the term most frequently used by Aboriginal people today³⁷ and is the term most frequently used in recent literature, although it will be argued later that this convention masks the linguistic heterogeneity of the crews. It is, of course, true that many of the praus (sailing vessels) most recently known to officialdom were registered in Macassar in South Sulawesi (previously Celebes) and were frequently captured by Macassans.

Anecdotal, archaeological and documentary evidence of 'Macassan' activities has been well researched, particularly by Macknight (1969a, 1972, 1976). They annually visited North Australian coastal waters, seeking trepang or *bêche-de-mer*, the sea-slug which abounds in the shallow waters around the Arnhem Land coast as well as turtle shell and pearl shell in exchange for metalwares (knives, axes, fishhooks, etc.), glass, cloth, tobacco, alcohol and other goods. They called the region *Marege*¹.

... the most considerable fisheries are consequently to the eastward from Celebes to New Guinea and Australasia, where the formation of the land is most favourable. The most productive are the fisheries among the Aroe islands and those in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and generally on all the north-west coast of New Holland, called, by the Bugis fishermen, *Mureje*, and by the Chinese, *Lam-hai*.
(Crawfurd 1820 [III]:441)

Travelling south in convoys of around 50 praus, the 'Macassans' were brought to North Australia by the north-west monsoons, arriving about December. The praus, each containing around 30 men, split up and spread out along the coast, each

prau returning to its traditional camp site where the 'Macassans' settled for the wet season, bartering trepang, drying and smoking it. Around April, the south-east trade winds took the 'Macassans' back to Sulawesi. Their influence on the Aboriginal cultures of these coastal regions was extensive, although as Maddock (1975:22), Cole (1977:41), and others have suggested, the seasonal nature of their visits meant that they did not transform the fundamental basis of Aboriginal society (see also Macknight 1972:318).³⁸

The Macassan camp-sites are still clearly visible on Groote Eylandt today, marked by tamarind trees and the remains of stone ovens. However, the Macassans left behind a far richer heritage than the physical evidence of their presence. They brought an enrichment of Groote Eylandt culture in technology, in language, in song and story and in world view, but it was enrichment without radical change. (J. Harris 1979:4)

Although it is known that the 'Macassan' trade officially ended in 1907, the date of its commencement is much less certain. Macknight (1976) has surveyed the evidence available up to that time. Logically, he dismisses claims that the industry dates 'from time immemorial' (1976:93) and also rejects on technical grounds the results of carbon-dating his own samples of charcoal from trepang-boiling fireplaces, one of which gave results which suggested an age of about 800 years. On the other hand, more recent dates from which it is definitely known that the industry was in operation can be readily established. Flinders (1814:228) for example, encountered six of a fleet of 60 praus at Cape Wilberforce in 1803 and claimed to have ascertained that the industry had been in operation for about twenty years. Flinders' informant, Pobassoo, was commodore of his section of the fleet of praus, and Flinders (1814:231) claimed to have learnt from him that this was his sixth or seventh such voyage in the past twenty years and that he was one of the first to make the voyage. There are, however, as Macknight (1969b:66n4) points out, some inconsistencies in Flinders' account, due possibly to the interpretation of the discussions through Flinders' Malayan cook. Nevertheless, if it is accepted that the annual visits began sometime before 1783, then that date can be taken as an upper limit and so the commencement of the industry must be sought earlier than 1783.

The 'Macassan' trepang industry encompassed many more places than North Australia. Macknight (1976:94, 95) has studied both Dutch and Indonesian documentary evidence of 'Macassan' trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is mention of localities to the south of the archipelago. Although possible references to Australia are not conclusive, it is reasonable to infer that some of them do denote Australia.

As the Chinese consumption of trepang was the basis of the industry, it is significant that this dates only from the sixteenth century and that the import trade in China did not begin before the late seventeenth century (Macknight 1976:94).

The northern coast of this continent is alone known to the natives of the Archipelago, and among these only to the Macassars of Celebes and the gipsy Malays, who frequent it yearly for the fishery of the tripang or holothurion. This they seem to have done so for ages, although seen there for the first time by Flinders in the beginning of the present century. Of the time when this fishery first commenced

there is, of course, no record, but it is certain it could not have been before the first arrival of the Chinese, since these are the only people that consume the tripang, and still the only parties who furnish funds for carrying on the fishery. (Crawfurd 1856:25)

The date of the defeat of the Macassarese fleet by the Dutch, can be firmly established as 1667. This caused the trade restrictions which Macknight (1976:96) believes forced the Macassans to direct their enterprises further afield to such places as Australia. This event is the one upon which Macknight places the greatest significance, so that he argues that the 'Macassan' visits to Australia began between 1650 and 1750, and most probably at the end of the seventeenth century.

To summarise this section, it is not unreasonable to assume that there was close contact between Aboriginal groups in coastal Northern Territory and the 'Macassan' trade for at least two centuries prior to the end of the industry in 1907.

The 'Macassan' pidgin

It is to be argued in this section that a pidgin language developed in parts of coastal North Australia as a means of communication between Aboriginal people and the trepangers and that this pidgin language or one based on it, became a lingua franca between Aboriginal groups in the same area. This pidgin language will be labelled the 'Macassan' Pidgin, firstly in recognition of the currency of the term 'Macassan' to describe both the trepangers and their language and secondly in accordance with the accepted convention by which pidgin languages are named after their base or lexical-source language. Quotation marks will be retained in recognition of the imprecise nature of the term 'Macassan'.³⁹

Until Urry and Walsh's insightful paper in 1979,⁴⁰ few writers seriously raised the possibility that the means of communication between Aboriginal people and the trepang traders may have been a trade pidgin. Rather, their writings imply that the Aboriginal people generally spoke the native language of the trepangers. Whereas, as noted above, many writers describe the trepang traders as Malays, a few of them also refer to the language with which the traders and the Aboriginal people communicated with each other as Malay.⁴¹ In this context, the use of the term 'Malay' is linguistically fairly imprecise as it was widely used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in reference to the languages of the whole South-east Asian archipelago. As Wang Gungwu writes, Malay initially

... referred to the name of a country about half-way down the east coast of Sumatra. Later, it was used for the language and peoples of the Malacca Empire, and with the spread of Islam from Malacca and its dependencies, and the widespread use of the Malay language as the *lingua franca* of commerce and religion, it was also applied to a much larger area. (G. Wang 1981:108)

Ellis (1936:130) for example, who had crew members on his pearling lugger whom he termed 'Malayan', described an encounter with Aboriginal men north of Groote Eylandt in 1890.

To our great surprise, the blacks began talking Malay fluently to our men and they accepted the position quietly when told that they were not allowed on board. They said that Malays often came in their prahus from their own country, to fish for bech-da-mer and catch hawksbill turtles, from which the ordinary tortoise-shell of commerce is produced. (Ellis 1936:130)

By far the majority of writers, however, refer to the language as 'Macassan' or 'Macassarese'.⁴² Searcy, for example, almost always referred to the language as 'Macassar' as did a number of other early writers like Carrington.

... all the papers on the proas were made out from Macassar to Marigie, which means black fellow's country or unknown land. All the coast natives spoke Macassar. (Searcy 1905:10)

While exploring Bluemud bay we managed, after considerable trouble, to communicate with the natives. Nearly all of them spoke the Macassar tongue and from them we learned that they were expecting the Malays down soon on their annual visit for trepang fishing. (Carrington 1886:65)

There were a few writers who expressed the opinion or at least implied that this language was a trade pidgin, but they tended to do so inconsistently. Warner (1932:490, 1969:456) called it a pidgin Malay dialect, but elsewhere he called it Macassan. Macknight, while mentioning a number of languages possibly spoken by the trepang traders, acknowledges Sutton's suggestion that it was actually a Macassarese pidgin (1976:160n37). The use of the phrase 'trade Macassan' by R. and C. Berndt (1954:28) and by Dixon (1980:489, n8.4) also belongs in this category, as perhaps does Earl's use (1842:140) of the term 'patois', although elsewhere Earl referred to the language as the Macassan dialect of the Malayan language. Gibson-Hill (1959:10), although writing about Earl, termed the language a 'Bugis patois'. Reinecke et al (1975:745) from the perspective of the comprehensive survey of world pidgins and creoles, were led to hypothesise that

If really pidginized Malay is to be found anywhere, one would expect it in the limited contacts between Malay speakers and primitive non-Austronesian peoples. Warner (1932) and Berndt and Berndt (1954) give some sociological but no linguistic information on the Malay recently spoken in Arnhem Land between Macassarese and Australian Aborigines.

Unfortunately, it may never be possible to reconstruct this contact language as there are few records of actual speech in writings dealing with Australia. The era of its use ended in 1907 and anyone who had even heard the language as a child would now be over 80 years of age. Old Charlie Galiawa Wurramarrba often told me on Groote Eylandt how as a boy he used to eavesdrop on his father's conversations with the Macassans on Bickerton Island and learned many words. Galiawa died in 1978. It is paradoxical and sad that interest in an historical period often arises just after the death of the last informants. Now, in 1984, there are no Aboriginal people who spoke the 'Macassan' Pidgin as adults and only a handful who even saw the 'Macassans' as children before 1907, yet twenty years ago it would have been possible to record remembered phrases which, even if imperfectly recalled, would now be valuable information.

Old Wonggu occasionally introduced a Macassar sentence into ordinary conversation so as to puzzle me, and he would enjoy his joke is using this dialect learnt fifty years previously from East Indian traders.
(Chaseling 1957:50)

It would, for example, have been interesting to test whether any Aboriginal people could comprehend some of the existing trade pidgins or *lingue franche* of the Indonesian archipelago. Although, as Walker and Zorc (1981:109) show, research into Austronesian languages is still a fertile area of investigation which can shed light on the origin of loan-words in present day Aboriginal languages, the Australian 'Macassan' Pidgin will not be reconstructible because, although lexically based on the language of the 'Macassans', it was developed and used in Australia. The point of view adopted by Urry and Walsh (1979) is that the language was not simply 'Malay' or 'Macassan', but a local variety of a widespread trade pidgin. The case for this will be examined in detail below under the following headings.

- a) The multicultural nature of the crews and their likely use of trade languages.
- b) Visits by Aboriginal people to Sulawesi and elsewhere.
- c) The use of the language as a *lingua franca* between Aboriginal people.
- d) The use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin to foreigners generally.
- e) Early European impressions of the language.
- f) The origin of loan words in present day Aboriginal languages.

The multicultural nature of the crews and their likely use of trade languages

It has been noted above that most authors referred to the trepang traders as 'Malays' or 'Macassans'. It is reasonable to assume that these are simplifications and that, as Walker and Zorc (1981:109) point out, most authors would have very likely conceded that the traders did not necessarily represent a single language group. The records that we do have of the trepang traders are not only sparse but discontinuous. The trade was not generally known in the European world before Flinders' reports in 1803. Even if Flinders' interpretation of Pobassoo's claim that he was one of the first to engage in the trade in the region is correct, this may mean no more than that Pobassoo was one of the first to come from Macassar itself.⁴³ Since Flinders' voyage, the most detailed information comes from the era of the British garrisons at Raffles Bay from 1828 to 1829 and at Port Essington from 1838 to 1849 and then, after the establishment of Darwin, from the era of official control and duty collection from 1870 to the end of the industry in 1907.

These samplings of the last century of the trepang trade, at the beginning, middle, and end of the nineteenth century, certainly confirm Macassar as the port of origin of most of the praus during that period.⁴⁴ This does not mean that no praus ever came from other places. Earl (1846:65) said that of the thirteen praus that visited Port Essington in 1840, eleven were from Macassar, one from Sumbawa and one belonged to the Bajau.

Early literature often mentioned the Bugis, who also came from South Sulawesi, but who spoke a language which was related to but distinct from Macassarese. Macknight (1976:146n5) cautions against the placing of too much emphasis on references to Bugis because the term was used generally to designate people from any part of Southern Sulawesi. Nevertheless, Macknight's own researches (1976:17) into crew lists and other sources of information show that it is not always possible 'to distinguish confidently between Macassarese and Bugis' and that Bugis dignitaries definitely had financial interest in, if not ownership of, at least part of the fleet. Although, as noted earlier, Aboriginal people tend to use terms related to Macassar, they still speak of the Bugis today. They also refer to the traders as 'Malay' (Tindale 1925:132) and by a number of other designations which will be discussed later.⁴⁵ Aboriginal people can still describe the Bugis praus which they distinguished from the Macassan praus by the different curve to the bows and, more particularly, the large eye painted on them (R. and C. Berndt 1945:40). These important distinctions have been recorded by early writers in the South-east Asian archipelago. Crawford (1820(I):193) noted that the vessels 'of each separate nation or tribe have a distinct character' and also that the Bugis praus (1856:74) could not fail to attract attention because of the 'peculiar build of their vessels'. Walker and Zorc (1981:119) list the occurrence of the Gumatj double label *buki-manggata* ('bugis-macassarese'). Furthermore Collet Barker,⁴⁶ commandant of the British settlement at Raffles Bay in 1828 and 1829 recorded in his diary that the trepangers distinguished between themselves and the Bugis to whom they referred as traders. Crawford (1856:75) called the Bugis 'the carriers of internal trade' to every country of the Archipelago.

Pomaomo said he had no doubt that before the next season there would be trading vessels here from Macassar (Boughies he called them) when they came to know there was a settlement ... Spoke again of the Boughies and said they would probably be here in about 2 months after he left Port Essington.

... They carried tortoise shell, trepang etc. to Singapore (Barker 1829:2 Apr.)

The situation appears thus to have been that whereas most of the praus came from Macassar, some came from elsewhere. This, however, does not mean that there were Macassan praus on which everyone spoke Macassarese, Bugis praus on which everyone spoke Buginese and so on. The crews of the praus were decidedly multicultural and the sociolinguistic situation would not have been so simple.

But if Macassarese and Bugis made up the majority of the crews, they were not alone. In one of the crew lists ... there is a *Papua* - that is, a man from New Guinea. The name of one of the captains who called at Raffles Bay in 1829, Boodieman, almost certainly indicates that he was Javanese, and we hear also of 'a native of Ceram'. There were probably few crews that did not include some variety. (Macknight 1976:18)

As well as documentary records such as those examined by Macknight, there is one clearly reliable eyewitness account by Earl, who described the mixed population of Port Essington at the beginning of the trepanging season as the praus began to congregate.

... the population of the settlement became a very motley character, for the Australians of perhaps a dozen different tribes might be mixed up with natives of Celebes and Sumbawa, Badjus of the coast of Borneo, Timorese and Javanese, with an occasional sprinkling of New Guinea negroes. (Earl 1846a:240)

Walker and Zorc's (1981) analysis of Austronesian loanwords in a group of north coast languages indicates that as well as Macassan, there were a variety of other possible origins of such words including, for example, the Southern Philippines from where Bisayan slaves were taken and sold in Macassar (p.116).

Even where the multicultural nature of the crews of the praus is recognised, some authors generally seem to presume that each person spoke in and was spoken to in his own language. Macknight (1972:294) claims that there was 'a natural tendency for the language of the Macassans to dominate in communication' but that 'Buginese was the next most widely used language'. Macknight further presumes (1972:295) that a Javanese man with Flinders, to whom 'Macassans' spoke, must have been addressed in Javanese. Without denying the very real likelihood of many crew members being multilingual, Macknight's position would appear to be somewhat simplistic. The history of maritime trade indicates that there are frequent developments of nautical jargons and related trading pidgins. Urry and Walsh (1979:4-6), arguing that the crews of the 'Macassan' praus would have been no exception, introduce into the literature the significant proposal that the language of the 'Macassan' trading operations was a 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin.

The great diversity of local languages in insular south east Asia has long been mediated by the ability of various groups to utilise *lingue franche*. Although the Portuguese language has been a significant contributor to these *lingue franche* since the beginning of the fourteenth century, it is surely not reasonable to claim, as Wurm (1971:1003) does, that Portuguese-based pidgins were the first pidgins in the region, as if no pidgins arose from pre-European language-contact situations. There were no doubt trade languages long before the Portuguese arrived (Urry and Walsh 1981:93).

But precisely because the extensive area of Indonesia is fragmented into hundreds of geographical and cultural units, each with its own language, there has been from time immemorial a need for a single common language which could be understood not only by the natives of the archipelago, but also by the constant waves of foreigners who came to Indonesia attracted by her celebrated riches. Of course, at times when the archipelago was dominated politically or culturally by foreign powers, there was a prevailing tendency for the language of that foreign culture or foreign political power to become the language of ordinary intercourse, e.g. Sanskrit in the Hindu period, Arabic in the age of Islam, Dutch under Dutch colonialism, and Japanese under the Japanese Occupation. But because the structure of these foreign languages differed markedly from that of the languages of Indonesia, and because they were only comprehensible to a small stratum of Indonesian society, alongside, or beneath the foreign language, there was inevitably always a second *lingua franca*, less alien to the native peoples of the archipelago.

... The great Kingdom of Srivijaya, which dominated a considerable portion of South-East Asia at the beginning of the Christian era, and which had its centre in a Malay-speaking area of Indonesia, was very influential in making Malay the *lingua franca* of the islands. Extremely early Malayan inscriptions are to be found not only in the Malay-speaking areas, but also outside them, as the Gandasuli inscriptions in Central Java (A.D. 827 and 832) attest. But one should also remember several other factors of the greatest importance and significance. First of all, the Malay-speaking areas lay on both sides of the straits of Malacca, the most important sea-entry to the Indonesian archipelago and the only sea lane connecting the East and the West. Secondly, the Malay peoples were seafaring traders and migrants who wandered far and wide beyond their native land. Thirdly, Malacca was for more than a hundred years the chief port of South-East Asia, where merchants from Indonesia and other countries congregated. It was also an important centre for the spread of Islam. (Alisjahbana 1966:57-58)

As Anwar (1980:3-4) and Alisjahbana (1966:183-184) point out, Malay became known as the 'language of the Orient' and was used in India and in China and in all places outside the South-east Asian archipelago to which the maritime trade routes extended. Indeed, one could well ask what is meant by the designation 'Malay'. Reference has already been made to the generalised use of the term in the nineteenth century to cover the languages of the South-east Asian archipelago and even today the term covers, if not distinct languages, at least a number of dialectal forms (Reinecke et al 1975:745). Malay has been a dominant contributor to the trade languages of the region for a long time and as Reinecke et al (1975:745) point out, simplified forms of it have no doubt existed from the time that the language first spread from eastern Sumatra. Authorities such as Alisjahbana (1966:59) and Anwar (1980:4) refer to the trade language variety of Malay as 'low' Malay or 'bazaar' Malay, but Ismail (1959:7) is still able to emphasise that before its modernisation, the Malay language had been the *lingua franca* of the whole archipelago.

Immediately prior to European expansion into the region, commercial maritime trading enterprises were already flourishing under Moslem entrepreneurship (Whinnom 1956:5; Boxer 1969:45; Mulvaney 1969:33). As Beg (1979:79) points out, there are, even today, at least one thousand Arabic loan words in Malay, some authorities having set the total as high as two thousand.

Arabic words have come to Malay vocabulary as a result of Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago and the perpetual commercial contacts between the two regions. (Beg 1979:xxiii)

The most reasonable position to adopt would seem to be that when the Portuguese began in 1511 to take over what had been a Moslem trading empire (MacGregor 1955:5), the language of commerce was an Arabic-Malay trade pidgin (Whinnom 1956:5). As has been shown in some detail in Chapter 2, the Portuguese were, by this time, quite accustomed to the use of a Portuguese-based pidgin and this pidgin, rather perhaps than the full Portuguese language itself, began rapidly to influence the existing trade languages. Some of the abundant borrowings of Portuguese into all major languages of the archipelago are given in *da Franca*

(1970). Whinnom (1956:9) and Urry and Walsh (1981:93) term what developed a 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin, although perhaps it could more accurately be termed a 'Portuguese-Arabic-Malay' pidgin, depending on whether or not the Arabic content is to be regarded as included in 'Malay'. This 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin (or pidgins) survived the decline of Portuguese influence and subsequently the decline of Spanish influence. This was partly due to the fact that when the Dutch assumed supremacy in the archipelago some two centuries after the Portuguese had first arrived, the subjugated people and even the leaders of the Dutch allies insisted upon the continued use of 'Creole Portuguese' (Boxer 1969:126; Bowen 1971:940). A trade language based on both Portuguese and Malay was undoubtedly in wide use at the height of the Macassan commercial activities.

In eastern Indonesia the major trading port for a long period was Macassar and so the 'Portuguese-Malay trading languages' are often associated with Macassarese. The exact nature of the 'trade-languages' is still unclear but they undoubtedly varied over time and from area to area. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries trade flourished between Macassar and the major Portuguese controlled port of Malacca: the trading boats often contained mixed Portuguese and 'native' crews and the probable influence of Portuguese on the 'trade-languages' at this time was quite profound.

With Dutch incursion into 'Indonesia' in the seventeenth century these contacts were broken but the 'Macassan' traders developed new mercantile contacts and the 'Portuguese-Malay trade-languages' continued to be used. By the eighteenth century when apparently extensive 'Macassan' contacts with northern Australia seem to have been established to gather trepang, the use of the 'trade-languages' was still widespread in eastern Indonesia ... (Urry and Walsh 1979:5)

As Urry and Walsh go on to point out, it is necessary to distinguish between the languages used among themselves by members of the prau crews, those used among merchants in the trading ports, and those used in exchanges with Aboriginal and other indigenous people.

If most of the prau captains and many of the crew members were Macassan, it is reasonable to presume that at least among themselves, the Macassan people used Macassarese. It is also reasonable to argue that this language would not have been the only language used on the praus. The multicultural nature of the crews has been demonstrated already. The view that all of them would always have spoken Macassarese is difficult to justify, as is the opposite extreme that all of them always spoke their own distinct languages. It is much more likely that a trade language was used by these non-Macassan crew members. The same argument can be applied to the small but significant number of praus which were not based in Macassar. Where people of a particular linguistic background predominated, such as the Bajau, their own language would also have predominated, and it would obviously not have been Macassan. Where the crew members were of different linguistic backgrounds, a trade or nautical language would have been used. This could hardly have been anything other than the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin or some variant of it.

The more important question to be addressed is what language was spoken between trepangers and Aborigines. Although it has been shown that many of the praus originated in Macassar and that a high proportion of crew members were therefore probably Macassan, it does not necessarily follow that Macassarese, as such, was the language of trade in the various places which the praus visited, such as ports of call on their way home from Australia. In such places, it would seem unarguable that the lingua franca of the region, the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin, would have been the language of the ports.

There are few references in the literature to the language spoken between the trepangers and Europeans in Australia itself, but those that do exist refer to it as Malay. Goyder (1869:16 April), leader of the Darwin Survey team, obtained a statement from two crew members of a wrecked prau through 'Burton who understands a little Malay ...'. It is interesting in this context to note Barker's comments on his communication with the prau crews in Raffles Bay in 1829. It is clear from Barker's diary that the expectation always was that communication would be in what Barker termed 'Malay'. He appears to have invariably utilised the services of his 'Malay' interpreter. Whereas it has already been noted that a number of writers tend to use the terms 'Malay' and 'Macassan' indiscriminately, Barker did not. In fact, Barker considered it worth noting when he encountered a trepanger who could not speak 'Malay'.

They enquired the nature of our settlement and seemed pleased when I told them, saying it would save them the trouble of going to Singapore. They seemed to know little however of general trading having only been engaged in trepang fishing. *One of them did not speak Malay but only the Macassar tongue.* (Barker 1829:11 May. Italics mine.)⁴⁷

As Urry and Walsh (1981:94) point out, whatever trade language or pidgin was developed for communication between the trepangers and Aboriginal people, it must have been based on a language comprehensible to the crew. Given the general expectation that the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin would be the language of trade, it would seem to be the logical choice for the language of the trepang industry in North Australia.

The situation in North Australia, however, was somewhat different from the transient life of the trading ports of the Indonesian region. The trepangers stayed for several months each year, some establishing long-term personal relationships with local Aboriginal groups. Given that many, if not most, trepangers came from Macassar, it is likely that Macassarese would have been used at least to some extent during their operations, in the presence of, and possibly even in communication with some Aboriginal people. This likelihood is enhanced by the fact that some Aboriginal people visited Macassar for extended periods.

Travel by Aboriginal people to Macassar and to other parts of the South-east Asian archipelago

Visits by Aboriginal people to Macassar are widely acknowledged in the literature.⁴⁸ Substantial Aboriginal narratives exist, some of the most detailed being from Groote Eylandt and Elcho Island (Berndt and Berndt 1954: 50-63). Detailed prau records from Raffles Bay in 1829 show that the *Pattie Djawaija* carried a crew of 37 'besides 4 black natives who were going to

Macassar' (see Macknight 1976:130-131). Barker (1829:7 May) described these particular Aboriginal travellers in his diary. On an earlier occasion, he recorded that the crew of a prau had

... described a very good race of Blacks (in the Gulf of Carpentaria as well as I could make out) who ... spoke a little Malay. Several had been at Macassar, probably 100 and some were there now. (Barker 1829:2 Apr.)

This reference is almost certainly to Groote and Bickerton Islands. Any reasonable conjecture as to the population of those islands in 1829 indicates that a hundred visitors to Macassar represents a significant proportion of the population (J. Harris 1984b:114). Barker did not actually record any such voyages by Raffles Bay Aboriginal people, but some fourteen years later at Port Essington, Jukes (1847:35) observed that a prau

... brought back a native of Port Essington, who had gone away with them last year to Macassar. This, we were told was not an uncommon occurrence as the natives of Port Essington are very fond of going abroad to see the world.

Formal concern was expressed about this practice in official correspondence during the 1870's at which time there seemed to be some doubt as to whether the Aboriginal travellers went to Macassar voluntarily or under compulsion. The matter was of particular concern to the official 'Protector of Aborigines'⁴⁹ and was a frequent subject of correspondence between him and the Government Resident in Darwin and between the Government Resident and the South Australian Minister controlling the Northern Territory.⁵⁰ Cadell reported on the matter both from the north coast (SAA 790/1878/351) and from Macassar itself (SAA 790/1879/83), where recent legislation, requiring a deposit of 200 rupees per person for crew members recruited in Macassar, was making it difficult for Aboriginal people to secure return passages to Australia. The voyage to 'Macassar', however, seems to have been considered to be a normal feature of the life of many of the younger Aboriginal men and of some women (Macknight 1976:86). The Aboriginal perception would appear to be that most of the voyagers returned with exciting travellers' tales to tell.

Many of the black men went back to the Malay country with the returning fleets and stayed through the intervening season. There are a few cases of men who stayed permanently and married Malay women, but this was very rare. (Warner 1932:458)

When people used to go from here to Macassar, they used to come back with stories about how they were treated there ... Our people liked to go there and see these different things ... where they made their dug-out canoes, and the beautiful cloth called liba, and their knives. (Lamilami 1974:70)

The linguistic significance of this is that the Aboriginal people concerned would have been obliged to gain some fluency in the language of the prau crews and of the places where they lived, and they would have used these skills in communicating with the trepangers in the years after they had returned home to Australia. Clearly a significant number of Aboriginal people went to Macassar itself as the commercial home-base of the trepang industry, but it is also important to note that the term 'Macassar' was used by Aboriginal people to

denote south-east Asia generally.⁵¹ Many Aboriginal people travelled to and lived in places other than Macassar. Not only were there other ports of call for the praus returning to Macassar, but an unknown number of people had opportunities to travel even further afield (Berndt and Berndt 1954:50; Worseley 1955:5). An interesting example was noted by a semi-official survey party in 1875 which met an Aboriginal man at Caledon Bay on the Western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria who had not only been to Macassar but also to Singapore where he had learnt, among other things, a small amount of English (SAA 790/1876/74).⁵² Tindale was able to record stories of such travels on Groote Eylandt within twenty five years of the close of the industry while people who had actually travelled away with the praus were still alive.

Several old men of the Ingura (Anindilyakwa) tribe, as youths, made voyages with the Malays, principally of Macassar, who regularly visited the North Australian coast until about twenty-five years ago, and are familiar with the language of Macassar, with sometimes a smattering of other languages, such as Bugi and Malay ...

One very old Bartalumbu man, Yambukwa by name, was taken away before initiation, and spent many years in various foreign places, returning as a middle-aged man ... He told us of woolly haired Papuans, of Timor Laut, Macassar, Ke, Aru, Banda, and many other places which I could not recognise by his names or descriptions. With the aid of one of our crew, a Macassar-Torres Strait half-caste, who conversed fluently with him, something was learned about the visits of the Malays. (Tindale 1925:130)

This involvement of Aboriginal people in the trepang industry outside Australia, their travels around the archipelago and their sojourns in Macassar itself indicate that those who underwent these experiences would have had the opportunity to become familiar with the languages of the region. It has been shown already that they were members of multilingual speech communities and quite possibly had a tradition of using contact languages that stretched back for several centuries. They were what Bickerton (1977:51) calls 'multilingual autodidacts' with well developed strategies for acquiring other languages and they would certainly have gained knowledge of a number of languages while overseas (Urry and Walsh 1981:95).

Firstly, they would have gained increased familiarity with the lingua franca of the ports, the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin. The ease with which Aboriginal people seem to have been able to merge into the cosmopolitan life of the trading ports, when considered in the light of the sociolinguistic and historical-linguistic logic of maritime trade expansion, argues for the existence of a lingua franca which Aboriginal people first learnt in Australia, used and expanded in South-east Asia, and then brought back with them, thus enriching the local contact language.

Secondly, those who remained for extended periods in Macassar itself would have become familiar with Macassarese. In the life of the port city of Macassar and in the Macassan households with whom they lived, Macassarese would have been the normal means of communication. On their return to Australia, these particular people would have retained reasonable facility in Macassarese. As particular praus tended to return year after year to the same locality, there to deal with the same groups, Aboriginal people who had returned from Macassar

would have been able to maintain annual direct contact with their Macassan acquaintances. In these circumstances, it seems likely that Macassarese could sometimes have been used in communication between native Macassan trepangers and Aboriginal people on some parts of the coast. It must also be noted that specifically Macassan crews did not visit all parts of the coast and that relationships varied from locality to locality. There was obviously a degree of friendship in some places. The Groote Eylandters still speak of how welcome the trepangers were, how they were awaited each year with excitement, and how flags were flown to guide them to where their hosts were waiting. It was from places such as Groote Eylandt that Aboriginal people travelled away with the 'Macassans'. On some other parts of the coast relationships were strained, in some cases quite antagonistic. Barker's diary shows this clearly. In such places, the sort of limited communications which would have occurred would most likely have been in a restricted form of the 'Portuguese-Malay' trade language.

Thirdly, Aboriginal people travelling around the archipelago in the multilingual company of other people involved in the trepang trade, would have had opportunities to learn something of yet other languages. There are a number of records of Aboriginal people stating that they could speak languages other than Macassarese, such as Buginese (Tindale 1925:130). Earl also made such observations including one, reported in Stokes (1846:61) in which an Aboriginal man spoke in 'the New Guinea dialect' when addressed in that language by a Ceramese who mistook him for a New Guinean.

The observation that some Aboriginal people knew and took pleasure in using a number of Austronesian languages when the occasion allowed it, does not detract from the fact that the situation demanded a lingua franca which, Urry and Walsh (1979:95-98) argue, must have been based on the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin. It is not unlikely that the trepangers would have used this pidgin in their first attempts at communication with Aboriginal people. One cannot, however, ignore the predominance of people from Macassar on some of the praus and the visits by Aboriginal people to Macassar itself. These facts point strongly to the likelihood that in some parts of the coast, there was considerable use of Macassarese or at the very least, that the Australian version of the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin contained a large number of lexical items of Macassarese origin.

This view, however, must be balanced against the only piece of evidence so far located of the trepangers' perception of the language. According to Barker (1829:2 Apr.), the trepangers at Raffles Bay described Aboriginal groups further to the East who '*spoke a little Malay*'. This is a very important observation because unlike many references to 'Malay', it is in the diary of someone who, as already noted, distinguished between 'Macassarese' and 'Malay' and who recorded the problems of communication with a trepanger who could speak '*only the Macassar tongue*'. It appears that it was not the language of Macassar but the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin, the general language of the trade in the archipelago, which was perceived by the trepangers themselves as the language of the trepang trade in North Australian waters.

The discussion so far has only acknowledged the linguistic input of the trepangers. In terms of what is normally understood to be the origin of pidgins, the language or languages of the trepangers certainly appear to have been the superstrate or target languages. The contact, however, spanned some

centuries and the question of Aboriginal contribution to the language of the trade must also be considered. The strongest evidence of this comes from the widespread use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin between groups of Aboriginal people.

The development of a lingua franca between Aboriginal people

As has been discussed earlier, Aboriginal people of the northern coastal regions belonged to multilingual speech communities and were quite able to communicate with all neighbouring groups. When, however, Aboriginal people used the raw materials of the languages of the trepang trade, which were common to widely separated groups, and made from them a lingua franca for use between themselves, it had far reaching sociolinguistic and cultural consequences.

It may be presumed that the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin, the trade language of the archipelago, formed the basis of the contact language of the trepang trade in this area. It may also be presumed, that in areas of intense contact with specifically Macassan people and with Macassar itself, Macassarese was also a language of communication. It should not, however, be presumed that Macassarese or even the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin was simply taken and used, quite unmodified, by various groups of Aboriginal people in communication with each other.

Urry and Walsh (1981:96) emphasise the necessity to distinguish between the language of the trepang trade and the local lingua franca. Not to do so is to deny Aboriginal people all creativity and linguistic innovation in the development of the 'Macassan' Pidgin which was to become their own lingua franca, yet it is now extremely difficult to determine just what the Aboriginal or substrate contribution may have been.

Whereas there is unarguable evidence that the 'Macassan' Pidgin was used between Aboriginal people, no one has ever claimed that there was any distinction between the 'Macassan' spoken between trepangers and Aboriginal people and that spoken between Aboriginal people themselves. All observers whose writings are known to the author considered them to be the same language (J. Harris 1984b:119). One of the more important observers was George Windsor Earl, who, because he was linguist of the British garrison at Port Essington, was interested in recording linguistic phenomena.

A very considerable portion of the coast natives have, from frequent intercourse with the Macassar trepang fishers, acquired considerable proficiency in their language ... They, however, contrive to make themselves well understood, not only by the Macassars, but by the people of the tribes with whose peculiar dialect they may not be familiar. (Earl 1846a:244)

What is even more significant is that Aboriginal people considered the language of communication with the trepangers and the language of communication with distant Aboriginal groups to be the same language. The following two quotations are portion of Mahkarolla's story as told to Warner on Milingimbi during the years 1926-1929.

(On a European sailing lugger)

There was a black man on board. He belonged to the tribe of Cape Don ... He talked Macassar. We could talk Macassar, too. We did not talk his language, and he could not talk ours. Macassar was always the language black men talked when they could not understand each other's language.

(Later at Cape Don)

That noon I came into camp. There was an old man there. He called me over and said he wanted to talk to me. He was very quiet, and he seemed kind, and I believed he wanted to help me ... he spoke Macassan.

(Warner 1958:475,477)

Another important observer was Alfred Searcy in the 1880s and 1890s. His intimate acquaintance with the region led him to conclude that 'all the coast natives spoke Macassan' (Searcy 1905:10). He was a collector of customs who had the specific task of patrolling the coast to levy duty on 'Macassan' imports and exports and so was particularly well placed to observe communications between the various groups in the region.⁵³ Searcy's constant companions were two Aboriginal men from Port Essington whose proper names, according to Searcy (1912:23), were Mangerippy and Arranboom, but to whom he always referred as Rippy and Boom. They accompanied him because they could

establish friendly relations with the coast natives by means of their knowledge of the Macassar tongue.

(Searcy 1912:41)

Of course, Port Essington people were not the only Aboriginal people who could speak the 'Macassan' Pidgin, but they had the added advantage of having retained their facility to speak English, or an English-based pidgin, learnt during the days of the British garrison there from 1838 to 1849.

These boys spoke good English, Macassar, and, of course, their own language. That is a good indication of their intelligence. I might mention that all the coast niggers to the eastward (of Port Darwin), from their long association with the Malays, spoke Macassar, therefore I always took Port Essington boys with me on my trips, so as to make friends with the Myalls — the wild natives.

(Searcy 1909:36)

Keppel, captain of the *Meander*, which visited Port Essington, noted the multilingual skill of the local people. In reference to the Port Essington people, he observed that

The native of Northern Australia is intelligent and apt. His intelligence is manifested both in the daily concerns of life and in the acquisition of languages. Many of the natives speak two or three dialects; and some, in addition, speak English and Malay fluently.

(Keppel 1853:157)

Searcy records instances of communication in the 'Macassan' Pidgin between his Port Essington assistants and various Aboriginal people all along the coast extending virtually to the known eastern limit of 'Macassan' trepanging activities.⁵⁴ Not only were they able to communicate with all trepangers with whom they came into contact but also with all Aboriginal groups.

(In the Goyder River, after their boat capsized)
 We struck out for the nearest point, but before reaching
 it a dozen blacks made their appearance, and in Macassar
 invited us to come in out of the wet. (Searcy 1912:234)

(At Melville Bay, with Aboriginal captive after they had
 been attacked)

When he opened his eyes, Boom and Rippy plied him with
 questions in Macassarese. (Searcy 1912:197)

(At Borroloola)

Boom and Rippy were having a high old time with their
 fellow-countrymen, making them laugh with stories, told
 in the Malayan tongue. (Searcy 1912:232)

There is quite a long history of the employment of Aboriginal speakers of the 'Macassan' Pidgin as interpreters between Europeans and other Aboriginal groups. The practice seems to have been adopted even earlier than the establishment of Darwin (1869) and it continued after permanent white settlement into at least the early years of this century, becoming virtually the accepted practice for official and semi-official expeditions. In the 1860s, a well-known Port Essington Aboriginal man, Robert (or Bob) White was an official interpreter on the *Beatrice* (Cadell 1868:10). Robinson's gold prospecting party in 1875 called at Port Essington and 'took in a supply of fresh water and some native blacks to serve as interpreters', which they succeeded in doing as far eastward as Bickerton Island (SAA 790/1876/74). Carrington's voyage to map the Northern Territory rivers in 1884 included Port Essington people (Carrington 1886:72). The government geologist's expedition around the Arnhem Land coast in 1907 took interpreters on board from Croker and Goulburn Islands (Brown 1908:3-4).

This lingua franca of which the Europeans were taking advantage was not something of their own creation nor even something the development of which their presence had prompted. Rather, it was a lingua franca which had arisen initially in order to facilitate trade with the 'Macassans' and which had been adapted locally to facilitate inter-group communication. There would seem to be little justification in maintaining that this North Australian contact language was the actual Macassarese language itself. Nevertheless, it is significant, as noted above, that neither Aboriginal people nor non-Aboriginal observers distinguished between this local language and the language used in the trepang trade. The strongest position to adopt would be that the Aboriginal lingua franca was a locally modified variant of the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin in which Macassarese was a particularly important lexical source.

A number of authors have held that the existence of this lingua franca enabled communication between members of widely separated Aboriginal speech communities who did not previously communicate with each other or who, at the most, did so infrequently and that this was a significant factor in the evolution of Aboriginal society as it now is or at least as it was at the close of the 'Macassan' era.

A pidgin Malay dialect was spoken by most of the older men (in 1929) among the tribes along the Arafura coast. This language became a lingua franca among the various linguistic groups who border the coast. A man travelling from Cape Don,

in the far west, could make himself understood to the people on Groote Eylandt. The language stimulated inter-tribal communication. (Warner 1958:456)

The world view of the aborigines was greatly widened, not merely by direct contact with the Malay sailors, but also by first-hand experience of Indonesia itself, since many aborigines took employment in the vessels of the visitors and thus visited the Celebes, the Aru Islands, Timor, Timor Laut and other parts of Indonesia for quite lengthy periods. During these voyages, moreover, they extended their knowledge of other Aboriginal tribes along the coast of Arnhem Land, and thus increased their awareness of their common aboriginal identity vis-a-vis the Malay strangers. (Worsley 1955:5)

Urry and Walsh (1979:7-8) point out that there were differing degrees of contact between Aboriginal people and the 'Macassans'. As noted already, it seems that 'Macassan'/Aboriginal contacts were often localised. The same praus regularly visited the same trepang-rich sections of the coast and there dealt with the same group of people from year to year while other areas less suitable for trepanging or where the Aboriginal inhabitants were more hostile, were not visited. As a consequence, at least in the initial stages of the industry, there would have been a number of 'Macassan' pidgins. As Urry and Walsh (1979:8) describe it, 'those groups who had established extensive contact with the 'Macassans', or whose members had gained linguistic expertise on board boats or in foreign ports would have developed an extended pidgin but those Aborigines who had minimal contact with 'Macassan', or who had acquired their pidgin from neighbouring Aboriginal groups, would have possessed a restricted 'pidgin'. Urry and Walsh's further discussion of this factor is worth quoting more fully.

While the direct linguistic relationships between Aborigines and 'Macassans' are of considerable interest, the relationships between different Aboriginal language groups using the 'Macassar languages' as *lingue franche* are of special importance. The 'Macassar' languages, created for 'Macassan'/Aboriginal communication were developed and used for other purposes. Some of these, such as a common language, are well documented, but other uses, for example as secret esoteric forms of discourse, can only be postulated. Whether this development of the 'Macassar languages' for purely Aboriginal functions occurred within Aboriginal communities, or where different language groups came into contact, is difficult to elucidate. It would seem reasonable to assume that Aborigines in the same language or dialect groups would have little recourse to 'Macassar language' among themselves. Neighbouring groups speaking different languages or dialects, who had already established contact before the arrival of the 'Macassans' were also unlikely to adapt another medium for communication. Therefore the most common use of the 'Macassar language' was probably between communities where little or no contact had previously existed. Such new contacts through the use of a shared language helped generate new exchanges and access to new forms of knowledge of Aboriginal languages.

Aborigines taken along the north Australian coasts by 'Macassans', far away from their own 'country', would have met speakers of different Aboriginal languages, though such contacts were unlikely to have been sustained. Aborigines inhabiting coastal areas, however, did have a means of communication using bark canoes and thereby created new links with distant coastal and island groups previously uncontacted. This coastal voyaging was greatly enhanced in both frequency and scale by the use of dug-out canoes equipped with sails, both items of technology introduced through Aboriginal contact with the 'Macassans'. These new boats probably were developed first by those Aboriginal groups who had acquired the 'Macassar language', at least before the new boat technology spread along the coasts of Arnhem Land. (Urry and Walsh 1981:96)

Aboriginal people who could speak a 'Macassan' pidgin and who chose to voyage along the coast either in the company of the trepangers or in their own canoes would have encountered a variety of groups (see Barker 1829:7 May). Some of these groups may have had good command of a 'Macassan' pidgin, while others may have had none. Furthermore, local differences both in Aboriginal substrates and the 'Macassan' target language may have resulted in different varieties of the 'Macassan' Pidgin.

In the development of the 'Macassar language' into a *lingua franca* in specific areas the nature and intensity of contact need to be considered. Groups sharing a well developed pidgin, acquired through extensive contact though with different groups of 'Macassans', could have maintained a fairly high level of communication and also have developed and perhaps standardised their 'pidgins' by sharing common features of their experience of the 'Macassar language'. On the other hand, groups possessing poorly developed 'pidgins' or where the association was asymmetrical (i.e. where a well-developed pidgin meets poor pidgin), might have created a more 'impoverished' form of the 'Macassar language', or at least one with considerable borrowings from the Aboriginal 'languages' or 'dialects' involved. At the present time we can say very little about this subject and can only recognise that the situation must have been complex and open to alteration. But there do appear to have been 'regions' of intensive 'Macassan'/Aboriginal contact and through the use of 'Macassar language', a development of intensive Aboriginal/Aboriginal contact ... (Urry and Walsh 1981:97)

As Bickerton (1977:51) indicates, the situation in which PL (a pidgin lexically based on language L) is the language of communication between speakers of L and speakers of non-L_i, non-L_{ij}, etc. is not as typical of pidgin usage as is frequently supposed. The far commoner situation, as described in quite different sociolinguistic situations by both Whinnom (1971:102) and Alleyne (1971:180) is that PL is used by speakers of non-L_i, non-L_{ij}, non-L_{iii}, etc. to speak to each other. Such a situation must necessarily result in a degree of conventionalisation of the pidgin and the available evidence would appear to indicate that this is precisely what happened to the 'Macassan' Pidgin in

coastal North Australia. It originated as a contact language between 'Macassans' and Aborigines, but its later social function was as a means of communication between differing Aboriginal groups. Many of them would have learnt and modified the pidgin, but they did not originate it.

The use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin to foreigners generally

The argument that the language of communication between Aboriginal people and the trepangers was based upon the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin rather than upon Macassarese as such, is further strengthened by the observation that the language was used in any attempt to communicate with foreigners generally. Throughout the whole of the period of European observation of Aboriginal/ 'Macassan' contact, there are records of attempts by Aboriginal people to communicate with Europeans and other foreigners who were not 'Macassans' by using the 'Macassan' Pidgin. There appears to have been a clear expectation on the part of Aboriginal people that the language of the trepang trade was a lingua franca which all foreigners would comprehend.

In fact, nearly all the words the natives use when speaking with us are Macassarese. (Earl 1842:140 in reference to Port Essington).

On our first arrival, the natives, from having been long accustomed to address strangers in this language, used it when conversing with us ... (Earl 1846a:244 in reference to Port Essington).

... blacks with whom he was able to communicate in Malayan (Searcy 1912:57 in reference to communication between a European and Aboriginal people at Borroloola in the 1880s).

We saw several natives on shore, and two came off in a fine dugout canoe which they propelled with powerful strokes. They were large, well-made men in splendid condition, but understood no word of English except the magic word 'Tabak'.⁵⁵ We found from John Wesley, who includes some knowledge of Malay among his accomplishments, that the few words they used were Malay. They asked for rice in Malay, and we gave them some. (White 1918:145 in reference to Groote Eylandt in 1907).

It is interesting that soon after the establishment of Port Essington, Earl (1842:139) mentioned that a man had been left behind from one of the trepang crews 'as interpreter with the natives'. It is not certain what the full implications of this actually are. Certainly, it is further evidence that the 'Macassan' Pidgin was used in communication with foreigners. It is, however, not clear whether the interpreter was needed because Earl was not going to be always present or because the local 'Macassan' Pidgin differed too significantly from the 'Malay' which Earl knew.

Searcy (1905, 1909, 1912) described numerous instances in which Aboriginal people initiated communication with him or with his party in the 'Macassan' Pidgin, and there are to a lesser extent, similar implications in the reports of a number of the exploratory or surveying parties of the period including Robinson (SAA/790/1876/74), Carrington (1886), and Brown (1908).

Although, as emphasised earlier in this chapter, the likelihood of contacts with foreign people prior to the 'Macassans' is strong, it would appear to be unarguable that it was through the 'Macassans' that Aboriginal people of coastal North Australia first learnt substantial information about the world beyond Australia. On the trepanging fleets and in their voyages throughout the South-east Asian archipelago, they came into contact with people of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds including Europeans. With all these people, it seems that the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin, of which their local 'Macassan' Pidgin was a variety, was always sufficient for their communicative needs. This involvement in and observation of its use no doubt gave them the not unreasonable expectation that it was a world-wide lingua franca. Furthermore, although they had almost certainly heard of the world beyond South-east Asia, their world outside the Australian continent was the region of trading and trepanging in which the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin was indeed the lingua franca.

Thus it is not strange at all that Aboriginal people should have attempted to communicate with Europeans in the 'Macassan' Pidgin, presuming it to be the language of foreigners generally. Old Charlie Galiawa Wurramarrba once gave me an interesting insight into the relationship between the Groote Eylandt concepts of 'Macassan' and 'foreigner'. Occasionally, Galiawa used the term *Malaya*⁵⁶ in reference to the Macassans, but he usually tended to refer to them as the *wurramakaja* in which the prefix *wurra-* is the normal Anindilyakwa prefix for 'people of', followed by *-makaja*, which is 'Macassar' as pronounced in Anindilyakwa. In this particular conversation, the contact with the 'Macassans' was being contrasted with the contact with the Europeans. In North-Eastern Arnhem Land, the normal term for European is *balanda*, derived ultimately from the Dutch Hollander through the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin. The word *balanda* is used commonly on Groote Eylandt today, but strangely enough, does not seem to have been in use between Aboriginal people and Europeans on Groote Eylandt until relatively recently. It has been suggested to me that *balanda* is a recent borrowing from the Yolngu-matha languages to the north-west or even from the English of modern-day whites among whom it is becoming widely used as a less perjorative word than 'whites' or 'Europeans'. This is certainly true of *balanda* in its unprefix form although as early as 1922, (Tindale 1925:132) recorded the prefixed form *wurrabalanda*.⁵⁷ In accordance with Anindilyakwa syntax, Galiawa, too, preferred to add the normal prefix and use the term *wurrabalanda*. On this occasion, however, he hesitated to use it in specific reference to me. He told me that I was not really *wurrabalanda* at all but that I was *wurramangkadara*. I had not heard this term before and asked him if the *wurramakaja* were *wurramangkadara* too. Galiawa, after some thought, said that they were, but that the Groote Eylandters really called them the *wurrabadariba*.

These two words label interesting conceptual distinctions. *Mangkasara* is Macassarese, both for themselves and their homeland (Cense 1979:441), while *pataripang*, in Macassarese (Cense 1979:787) and in many other Austronesian languages, means trepang-fisherman. Mapped into Anindilyakwa with the normal prefix, these words have become *wurramangkadara* and *wurrabadariba*, the former term referring to foreigners generally⁵⁸ and the latter to the 'Macassan' trepangers, the emphasis being on the trepangers as a group of people rather than on their trade as such.⁵⁹

Wurramakaja would seem, therefore, to be a more recent borrowing than wurramangkadara. Some Groote Eylandters have suggested that they learnt makaja from the Europeans, although Tindale (1925:132) noted its usage in 1922, less than a year after the first Anglican missionaries arrived there in 1921, the first Europeans actually to reside on the island (Cole 1975:39). The term makaja need not be derived from the English 'Macassar'. It could have been a borrowing from the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin. It is by no means certain that the Macassarese term Mangkasara was the most widely used term in the trade pidgin. The Malay term, for example, is Makasa.

Galiawa thus perceived the wurramangkadara as foreigners. In this context, Searcy's observations on the use of the Macassarese term Mangkasara by Melville Island Aborigines is particularly relevant.

... it was noticed that although their language was totally different from any on the mainland, they used the same words for 'white man' - 'monkey jarra', which is a Macassar expression. (Searcy 1909:46)

In the region to the North which was designated generally as Mangkadara, there were people of many more ethnic backgrounds and languages than the trepang traders. 'Macassans' and 'foreigners' were virtually synonymous to these Aboriginal people, and so it becomes obvious why they should have presumed that foreigners spoke the 'Macassan' Pidgin and why they therefore endeavoured to use it in communicating with them. Their expectation that foreigners should have understood it is clear evidence of their experience of a widely understood lingua franca throughout their foreign world, the same lingua franca which they were accustomed to use both at home and abroad.

Early European impressions of the language

There were few people with interest or training in languages in a position to observe 'Macassans' and Aboriginal people in coastal North Australia last century, and so it is hardly surprising that there are few records of the actual languages used. The one notable exception was George Windsor Earl, the linguist at Port Essington of whom mention has already been made. Fortunately, Earl recorded his earliest impressions in letters, a few of which were published in the Royal Geographical Society Journal.

You ask for vocabularies. I am in the most ridiculous perplexity about them. After having collected many words, I found that I was making a vocabulary of a horrid *patois* of the Macassar dialect : in fact, nearly all the words the natives use when speaking with us are Macassarese ... Now the natives of the Arasura Islands, though speaking dialects ... in which scarcely a single Malay word is to be found, readily acquire a perfect knowledge of the Malay language, with a correct pronunciation, although the learner be far advanced in years, while the natives of Australia make the most shocking jargon of it : witness a specimen : Macassar is pronounced Munkajerra; Karadz, Karridja; Bras, Bareja; in fact, they neither pronounce the letter s nor the letter f ...

... even in the Coburg peninsula the dialects differ, although the tribes are able to communicate with one another, either by means of one common language or by their understanding of one another's dialects.

(Earl 1842:140, written at Port Essington in July, 1840)

It is important to note that in the above quotation, Earl describes the 'Macassan' Pidgin both as 'a horrid patois of the Macassar dialect' and 'Malay language ... the most shocking jargon of it'. It is also important in this context to ask what Earl himself meant by 'Malay language' and 'Macassar dialect'.

Before his term at Port Essington, Earl can best be described as a seafaring adventurer with commercial ambitions and a flair for languages. He published, in learned journals, translations of articles from Dutch, French and Spanish originals (e.g. Earl 1849(a), 1849(b), 1852, 1856). Little is known of his early life (Gibson-Hill 1959:105). His knowledge of South-east Asian languages seems to have been gained between his arrival in Australia in 1829 and his departure for England in 1834. During this time he made many voyages around the archipelago as captain or mate or even simply as a passenger on various vessels. In Earl (1837), he records, for example, that he was mate on the Dutch schooner *Monkey* in 1832 with a crew drawn from all parts of South-east Asia. During this voyage, Earl (1837:3-4) notes that his 'leisure was chiefly occupied in gaining an acquaintance with the Malay language'. As captain of the British schooner *Stamford* in 1834, Earl's crew consisted of a 'Malacca Portuguese' first officer and a crew of thirty five Javanese and eight Chinese (Earl, 1837:201). Earl seems to have lived in Singapore from June 1833 to March 1834, during which period it is suggested that he became acquainted with the *Orang Laut* or *Bajau* (Gibson-Hill 1959:112). According to Brooke (1838:443), Earl spoke the *Bajau* dialect sufficiently fluently to be on intimate terms with them and had, in fact, at one time intended to engage *Bajau* boats and their crews and mount an expedition of his own to North Australia (Gibson-Hill 1959: 106; 112).

The strong impression gained from Earl's writings is that when he used the term 'Malay' or 'Malay language', he was referring to the lingua franca of the archipelago, the language spoken by his multiracial crew members, the language described earlier in this chapter as the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin. He also recognised and acknowledged what he called 'dialects' — the 'Bajau dialect', the 'Macassan dialect' and so on. In other words, he considered the 'Macassan dialect of the Malay language' to be a local variant of the pidgin, the type of 'Malay' spoken on 'Macassan' boats or by the 'Macassan' trepangers.

Coming from one of the few 'expert' witnesses available, Earl's views on language in North Australia are particularly important. Earl made three significant observations, all of them quite early impressions gained during his first substantial period of residence at Port Essington.⁶⁰ These observations were that:

- (i) the Aboriginal people of the Coburg peninsula spoke a number of local languages or dialects, as well as a language based on the 'Macassan dialect of the Malay language'.

(ii) they communicated with each other using various local dialects or languages, but always attempted to communicate with the Europeans in a 'Macassarese'-based (or 'Malay'-based) language.

(iii) this language was not the 'Macassan dialect of the Malay language' as such, but what Earl considered to be a 'horrid patois' or 'shocking jargon' of it.

So invariable was the Aboriginal use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin to Earl and the other Europeans that Earl (1846a:244) admitted to having believed it at first to be the local language. The differences between this language and what Earl understood to be the Macassan dialect of the Malay language which he actually enumerated were all pronunciation differences.⁶¹ Earl's use, however, of the terms 'patois' and 'jargon' imply syntactic and semantic differences as well. Stokes referred specifically to semantic differences.

Those first (words) made out at Port Essington, were found to be half Malay words, and of any meaning other than what they were supposed to convey (Stokes 1846 (II):22-23).

It is in any case likely although not absolutely demonstrable, that Stokes' comment was based on information provided by Earl. The 'Macassans' were also studied at Port Essington by Jukes of the survey ship, *H.M.S. Fly*, which called there four times. Jukes (1847:358) claimed that they spoke 'Malay in a different dialect from that used in Surabaya'. Another much later and somewhat less reliable reference to semantics appears in a marine survey report on the Northern Territory for the South Australia House of Assembly.

I did not hear them (Aborigines near Croker Island) make use of any English words, except in repeating them after our men, but they kept crying out several Malay expressions, apparently without knowing their meaning.
(SAPP[HA] 18/1865:2)

This statement is, of course, linguistically naive — the belief that the Aboriginal people were attempting to speak to Europeans in Malay with no knowledge of the meaning of the words they were using. The more probable explanation is that the survey party members failed to comprehend what was said to them. As it appears that they recognised the words as being 'Malay', there is a possibility that the meanings of the words differed from accepted 'Malay' meanings. It is not proposed to draw any strong conclusions from this particular observation but simply to regard it as confirmatory evidence of something which Earl, Stokes and others have already clearly indicated. Earl continued to make the same observations concerning the 'Macassan' pidgin in his later writings.

A very considerable portion of the coast natives have, from frequent intercourse with the Macassar trepang fishers, acquired considerable proficiency in their language, which is a dialect of the Polynesian. They never, indeed, speak it correctly, from their inability to pronounce the letter s, which occurs rather frequently in the Macassar language. Thus berasa becomes "bereja", trusaan "turulan", salat "jala", etc. They, however, contrive to make themselves

well understood, not only by the Macassars, but by the people of the tribes with whose peculiar dialect they may not be familiar. On our first arrival, the natives, from having been long accustomed to address strangers in this language, used it when conversing with us, and the consequence was that some vocabularies were collected which consisted almost entirely of this patois, under the supposition that it was the language of the aborigines. (Earl 1846a:244)⁶²

In other words, Earl provides incontrovertible evidence that Coburg Peninsula Aboriginal people, as well as speaking local Aboriginal languages, spoke another language based upon but not identical with the language of the 'Macassan' trepangers. As the other evidence discussed in this chapter has shown, the language was comprehensible to other Aboriginal people, comprehensible to the 'Macassan' trepangers, comprehensible to other South-east Asian people involved in maritime trade, such as Ellis' Malay crew (Ellis 1936 [1890]:130),⁶³ and comprehensible to whites with some knowledge of 'Malay', such as John Wesley (White 1918 [1907]:145).⁶⁴ This 'Macassan' Pidgin must have been a local North Australian variant of the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin — the trade language of the South-east Asian archipelago. The particular pidgin spoken at Port Essington may have been based on the 'Macassan dialect' of that trade language.

The origin of loan words in present day Aboriginal languages

There are a large number of loan words of Austronesian origin in the languages of coastal Northern Territory, yet for many years these remained unacknowledged in writings on Australian Aboriginal languages. Some of this was no doubt due to Crawford who, in his *Grammar and dictionary of the Malay language* (1852), claimed to have examined 30 Australian languages in search of words of Malay origin. Crawford said he found none, not even in the language of Raffles Bay in the Cobourg Peninsula. Given the wealth of reference to the general use of 'Malay' or 'Macassan' in the region during the nineteenth century, it seems surprising that the view persisted even into the early part of this century. Howitt (1904:26), for example, quotes Crawford and seems to concur with his findings. Even if Crawford had not had time to become acquainted with the writings of Wilson (1835); Earl (1842, 1846a) and Stokes (1846), it is surprising that Howitt was not familiar with these and with later observations.

Not long after the turn of the century the establishment of Christian missions in various parts of coastal North Australia led to vastly increased interest in the local languages. One of the direct consequences of this was the collection and publication of word lists both by missionaries and by linguists and anthropologists whose opportunities to visit the area were greatly enhanced by the presence of mission stations. Indeed one noted linguist, Arthur Capell, lectured Anglican missionaries during their pre-service training, maintained professional contact with them, and visited them on their various mission stations. These researches gradually revealed the true extent of Austronesian linguistic influence on the languages of the region. Tindale (1925, 1928) noted the 'Macassan' or 'Malay' influence on these languages and listed a number of Groote Eylandt words which he considered to be of such origin (1925:132). Jennison (1927:178) disputed Crawford's position and Howitt's

restatement of it, and he listed words of 'unmistakable Malay influence' from Goulburn Island and Elcho Island. Warner (1932:491) showed the widespread occurrence of 'Malay' personal and place names. Since that time many words, acknowledged as having 'Malay' or 'Macassan' origin, have appeared in various publications and some writers began to suggest that 'Malay' or 'Macassan' may have been imprecise linguistic designations. Among Indonesian scholars, for example, Sutjipto (1969:145-146) noted the existence of Javanese words. It remained, however, until 1981 for Walker and Zorc to commence the compilation of a comprehensive list of words of Austronesian origin in Aboriginal languages. The list reveals considerable influence by or borrowing from the 'Macassan' Pidgin - not items of syntax but particularly the names of things, more especially, but not exclusively, in the predictable semantic domains of trade items and ships' parts.

Walker and Zorc (1981) list 249 loan words of likely Austronesian origin in the *Yolngu-matha* languages of Northeast Arnhemland. They divide these words into four groups. Group 1 contains 99 words which can virtually be proven to be of Macassarese origin. Group 2 contains 59 words which could be of Macassarese origin, but could also be derived from other Austronesian languages because the Macassarese words are not sufficiently distinct from similar words in other languages. Group 3 contains 20 words which are not of Macassarese origin but are clearly derived from other Austronesian languages. Group 4 contains 70 words which are probably of Austronesian origin, but the donor languages of which are yet to be identified.

In the context of the evidence thus far discussed of the existence and nature of the 'Macassan' Pidgin, it is the writer's contention that many of these words formed part of the 'Macassan' Pidgin - that is, they were part of the particular variety of the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin which became the lingua franca of coastal North Australia. Given the evidence of the Macassan ownership of the trepanging praus and the multicultural nature of the crews, Walker and Zorc's initial findings are not surprising. The 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin would have contained words which were common to many Austronesian languages (Walker and Zorc's group 2) and words which were donated by specific Austronesian languages (Walker and Zorc's group 3 and some, no doubt, of their group 4).

Given the proven substantial involvement of Macassan people in the trepang trade in North Australia and given Earl's observations on the 'Macassan dialect of the Malay language', it would also be reasonable to expect considerable Macassarese influence on the 'Macassan' Pidgin. Walker and Zorc's group 1 could certainly indicate such influence. It is important, however, to note that Walker and Zorc's word list is drawn from the *Yolngu-matha* languages only. Knowing that the prau crews adopted the practice of returning annually to the same places on the coast, it could be argued that the preponderance of words of Macassarese origin in Walker and Zorc's list is evidence that the people of that part of the coast where the *Yolngu-matha* languages were spoken had close contact with people from Macassar. It is not necessarily evidence that these words were part of the 'Macassan' Pidgin more generally spoken around the coast and between Aboriginal people. Conclusions of this depth await research into the Austronesian loan words in a variety of other coastal Aboriginal languages, which is, in fact, just the sort of research which Walker and Zorc (1981:102-103) hope their work will prompt.

Discussion and Conclusions

Life in a multilingual speech community has been the normal expectation of Aboriginal people in North Australia for a long period of time. The use of a variety of linguistic codes in various communicative situations has during that time been the common experience of the members of these speech communities.

The possibility of contact with speakers of non-Aboriginal languages has existed for many centuries, although no such visits have as yet been categorically proven from non-Aboriginal sources. Aboriginal people of the northern coasts, however, preserve in their *Bayini* mythology, stories of visits by people whose languages they could not at first understand, but with whom they later learnt to communicate.

For approximately two centuries, if not longer, the 'Macassan' trepang traders annually visited the North Australian coast. Like the *Bayini* stories, the accounts of the coming of the first Macassans preserve the tradition of the Aborigines' initial inability to communicate with foreigners.

Six men went down to the beach to meet the Macassans while the others stayed behind. The two groups met, but they were talking different languages. By making signs the Macassans told the Maringas that they had come from a long way off and they were looking for land where they could get food and water, shells, trepang and pearl shells.
(Mirritji 1976:21)

The manner in which this communication problem was finally solved was by the use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin, a local adaptation or pidginisation of the pre-existing 'Portuguese-Malay' trade pidgin of the South-east Asian archipelago by members of the Aboriginal speech communities of the region. The major lines of evidence for this conclusion are as follows:

1. A variety of the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin would have been the language of communication of the multilingual crews of the trepanging praus. Although the Macassarese language may have been a particularly prominent component of a nautical pidgin on praus from Sulawesi, and may indeed have been used between Macassarese speaking crew members, it is unlikely that Macassarese as such was the language of the industry. On praus from Macassar, however, the lingua franca may well have been what Earl called the 'Macassan' dialect of the Malay language.
2. Aboriginal people would have learnt the pidgin initially as the language of the trepangers — the 'Macassans' — but later many had the opportunity to observe and to take part in its use as a lingua franca throughout the archipelago during their voyages on the praus. Many of these same people would have gained increased familiarity with Macassarese while living in Macassar.
3. The extensive use of the pidgin locally between members of distant speech communities is strongly suggestive that the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin of the trepang trade was locally adapted, if not actually repidginised. Some speech communities would have probably had much less contact than others with Macassarese as such, but no distinction seems ever to have been drawn between the language spoken between Aboriginal people and Macassans and that spoken between Aboriginal people belonging to different speech communities.

4. The fact that Aboriginal people attempted to use the 'Macassan' Pidgin to foreigners generally, including Europeans, indicates their perception of it as a widespread lingua franca.

5. The earliest European impressions of the 'Macassan' Pidgin were that although it was based on 'Malay', it was a '*patois*' or '*jargon*' of Malay. In this mid-nineteenth century context, it is virtually certain that the term 'Malay' designated the general language of commerce of the South-east Asian region. In particular, Earl noted that the Port Essington pidgin was based on the 'Macassan dialect' of Malay.

6. Studies published so far on the loan words from the 'Macassan' era in modern Aboriginal languages, indicate that Macassarese was an important but not exclusive donor language. Loan words can be traced to a number of other Austronesian languages and to European languages. It is not known at this stage whether Macassarese was as significant a donor language in all parts of the coast as it was in the area where the *Yolngu-matha* languages are spoken.

7. The 'Macassan' Pidgin was, however, spoken between widely separate Aboriginal groups, all of whom seem to have been readily able to communicate. Rather than postulating a number of lexical sources for the 'Macassan' Pidgin of North Australia, it would seem better to postulate a single lexical source, the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin which itself drew on a number of lexical sources.

8. There appear to have been local variations or dialects of the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin within the archipelago, and it appears certain that the 'Macassan dialect' was an important lexical source in at least some parts of the North Australian coast.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the 'Macassan' Pidgin was a widespread lingua franca in North Australia. Its decline, however, was not due so much to the demise of the trepanging industry as it was to increasing contact with speakers of another world language — English. This is the subject of the next chapter.

SECTION III

THE LINGUISTIC CONSEQUENCES OF EUROPEAN INVASION AND SETTLEMENT

This Section provides a detailed historical description of European invasion and settlement of the Top End of the Northern Territory. In particular, emphasis is given to the nature of the various contact situations, and the contexts in which language developments occurred.

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CHAPTER 5

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE CONTACT IN COASTAL NORTHERN TERRITORY AND THE RISE OF ENGLISH PIDGINS PRIOR TO 1869

Introduction

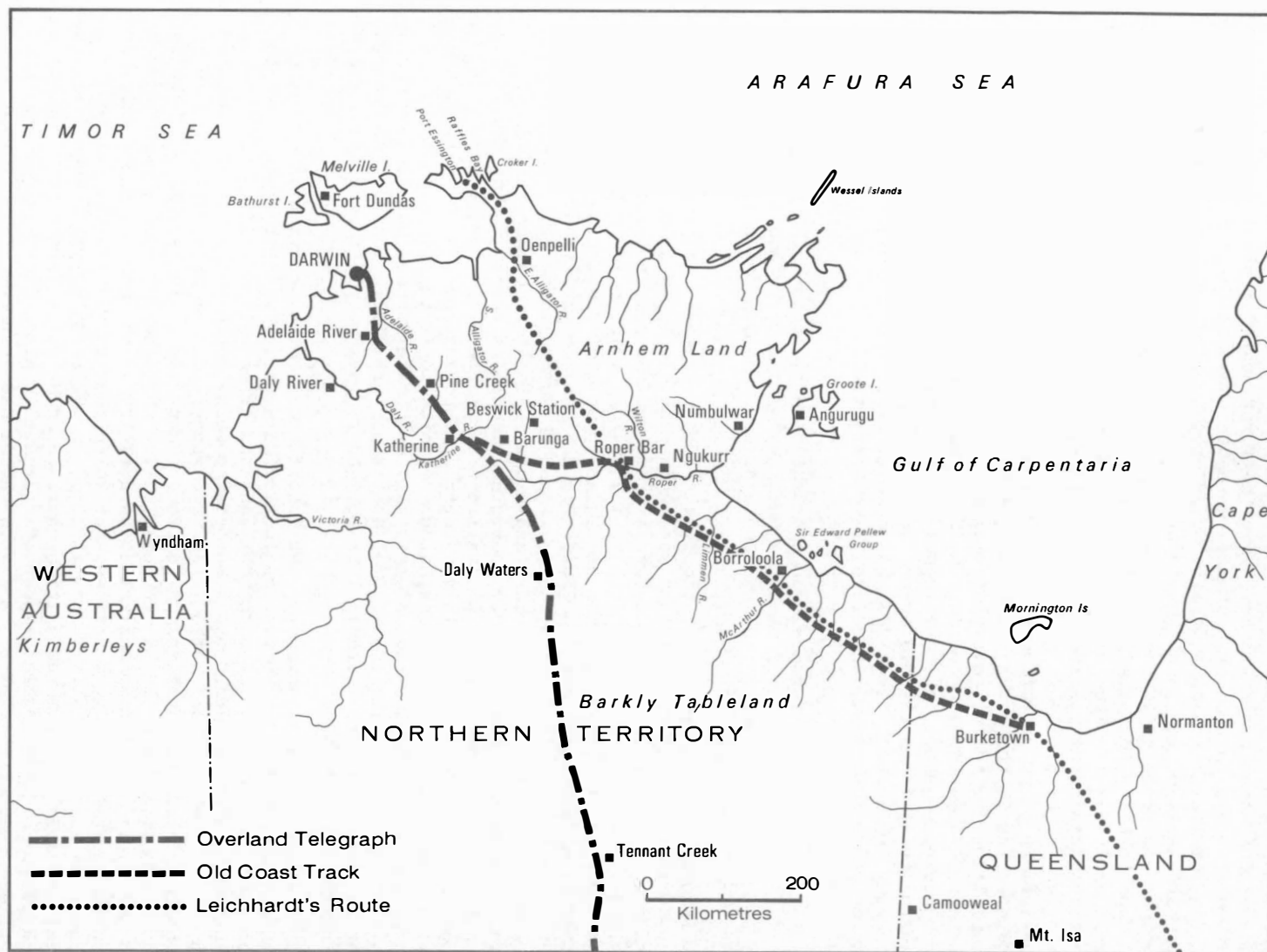
During the nineteenth century, multilingual Aboriginal speech communities, long accustomed to the use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin as a lingua franca with which to communicate with foreigners, became faced with the ever-increasing presence of English speakers. As a direct consequence, by the beginning of the twentieth century a widespread and widely understood English-based pidgin was in use between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the northern part of the Northern Territory.

In time, this pidgin also became used as a lingua franca between Aboriginal people from places sufficiently far apart to be outside each other's speech community, replacing the 'Macassan' Pidgin for this purpose in the coastal regions. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 trace the more significant events which led to the need for and the creation of that pidgin. The manner in which the pidgin subsequently became a creole in parts of the Northern Territory — while remaining a pidgin in others — will be examined in Chapter 11.

This rise of English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory during the nineteenth century was but one of the many and varied linguistic developments which have been and are still taking place in an already linguistically complex area. For well over a century, the history of language contact in the region has been tied to the history of European invasion and settlement which was itself a complex process. The major historical events which were of sociolinguistic significance form the framework of the next three chapters. To facilitate the reading of them, these events are set out below in tabular form (Table 4), while the major places mentioned are shown on a map of the Top End of the Northern Territory (Map 5).

Table 4: Some major historical periods of sociolinguistic significance in the Northern Territory

DATE	HISTORICAL EVENT	SOCIOLINGUISTIC SIGNIFICANCE
40,000 B.P. to present	Settlement and habitation of north Australia by Aboriginal people.	Emergence of large variety of languages. Organisation of linguistic units into multi-lingual speech communities.
? to c.1700	Era of probable contact with seafaring groups from South-east Asia.	Probability of experience of language contact situations.
c.1500 to 1824	Fleeting contact with various European explorers and slavers.	Explorers of negligible linguistic consequence. Slavers possible source of Portuguese loanwords.
c.1700 to 1907	'Macassan' trepang trade with Aboriginal groups of north Australia.	Adaptation of the South-east Asian trade pidgin by Aboriginal people for local use — the 'Macassan' Pidgin.
1824 to 1829	British military settlement at Fort Dundas, Melville Island.	Minimal language contact. No pidgin.
1827 to 1829	British military settlement at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay.	Beginnings of language contact. Use of both English and Aboriginal languages.
1838 to 1849	British military settlement at Victoria, Port Essington.	Further development of English-based pidgin.
1864 to 1866	Settlement at Escape Cliffs, Adelaide River.	Limited communication with Aborigines but another English-based pidgin began to emerge.
1869	Darwin — first permanent European settlement in the Northern Territory.	Development of various English-based pidgins in the Top End.
1872 to 1900	Gold and cattle bring widespread European settlement.	Subjugation of Aborigines. Language loss. Development of cattle station pidgins.
1900 to present	European control	Convergence of pidgins into NT Pidgin English. Creolisation at Roper River.



Map 5: The Top End of the Northern Territory

The first Europeans

The various Asian claims to have been the first non-Aboriginal people to 'discover' this portion of Australia were discussed in Chapter 4. The question of the first sighting of Australia by a European also remains unsolved. Many standard texts on the recent exploration of Australia attribute the first European 'discovery' to the Dutch when Jansz in the *Duyfken* sailed along part of Cape York in 1606, taking it to be part of New Guinea (Sharp 1963:16; Schilder 1976:44). The noted Australian historian Clark (1962:23) is more cautious, reminding his readers that this was only the first 'officially recorded' sighting. This qualification is in recognition of the strong possibility of prior Portuguese activity in the region. They certainly preceded the Dutch in the South-east Asian archipelago and such was the competition for the discovery of wealthy lands to exploit that the Portuguese had a well-known 'policy of secrecy' and, as Spate (1957:12) points out, 'few or no scruples about faking evidence if it suited state policy'. Spate (1957) regards the Portuguese 'discovery' of Australia as still very much an open question, while McIntyre (1977) has devoted a whole book to an examination of the evidence. We must, therefore, like Clark (1962:11), accept that the question of whether

... the Portuguese seamen stumbled on the coast of Australia or drew on their maps the outlines of a country about which they had heard from the Bugis or Banda seamen, must remain an open question.

It is generally accepted that the first 'authenticated' sighting of what is now the Northern Territory coastline was by the Dutch when 'van Colster on the *Arnhem* discovered the north-eastern extremity of Arnhem Land and the Wessel Islands in April-May 1623' (Schilder 1976:94). It is unlikely that van Colster had any contact at all with the Aboriginal people of the region which was to be named after his ship, nor did Pieter Pieterszoon who cruised along the Northern Territory coast in 1636 with the *Wesel* and the *Cleen Amsterdam*. Abel Tasman, however, with the *Limmen*, *Zeemur*, and *Brucq* in 1644, almost certainly made contact with Northern Territory Aboriginal people in the region of the Cobourg Peninsula but regrettably, his detailed records are lost (Powell 1982b:88). Another Dutch explorer, Martin van Delft, in the *Vossenbosch*, *De Waijer*, and *Nieuw Holland* in 1705 made considerable efforts to fraternise with the inhabitants of the same region, initially with some success but finally ending in confrontation (Major 1859:169). No further officially documented contacts between Europeans and Northern Territory Aboriginal people took place until the arrival of the British over a century later.

It is almost certain, however, that 'unofficial' Portuguese activity in the region continued. The Portuguese 'policy of secrecy' was largely related to the intention to discover rich new lands and to establish trading or exploitation links before other European powers, notably the Spanish, managed to do so. Indeed, some authorities have suggested that this policy led to conscious misrepresentations on Portuguese maps (Spate 1957:11-12). There was another reason for secrecy — the possibility that the Portuguese were engaged in obtaining slaves from Australia, an activity which they would not only have wanted to hide from other nations, but which the traders may have wished to hide from Portuguese officialdom itself. In 1826, for example, when a ship was sent for supplies from the British garrison on Melville Island to Timor, it was learned there that regular export of slaves took place from the Portuguese settlement at Dili (Timor). A French vessel had just taken a full load of

slaves (HRA, III [6]:683). The visit was also reported of an English ship which, because of its disreputable business, was flying Dutch colours. Given the clandestine nature of these activities, it is hardly surprising that references to Portuguese slave trading in North Australia are scant. There are, nonetheless, a few isolated indications. Melville Island was once known to South-east Asians, including the 'Macassans' as *Amba* or *slave* (Searcy 1909:46; Campbell 1834:155). Earl (1853:210) reported that around 1840

According to ... the older inhabitants of Timor, Melville Island was only less a source of slavery than New Guinea, in proportion to its smaller extent of surface, at the period in which the slave-trade was encouraged or connived at by the European authorities ...

There is, as well, thought provoking evidence from Australia. King (1826 [I]:113) described an incident from Melville Island in 1818, during which he was addressed in what appears to have been Portuguese. The incident came about as the result of King's theodolite stand being taken by some Melville Islanders.

... the stand was then taken up by one of their women, and upon our pointing to her, they feigned to think that she was the object of our wishes, and immediately left a female standing up to her middle in the water and retired some distance to await our proceedings. On pulling towards the woman, who, by the way, could not have been selected by them either for her youth or beauty, she frequently repeated the words "Ven aca, Ven aca" accompanied by an invitation to land ... (King 1826 [I]:113)

The words addressed to King and his party were certainly very close indeed to the Portuguese imperative *venha-ca come here* and, if so, could well have been learnt from Portuguese slavers (McIntyre 1977:85). Campbell, who lived briefly at the British garrison on Melville Island, considered those words to have been Portuguese. Campbell (1834:158) did not, however, recognise the probable Portuguese origin of some of the few words he collected from a Tiwi prisoner (e.g. *piccanini children*; *pakee peace*). There is a long tradition of attributing the allegedly hostile attitude of Melville Islanders towards foreigners to their experience with slavers (Searcy 1909:46; Hart and Pilling 1960:97-98; Morris 1964:2; Mulvaney 1969:36; Powell 1982a:52). Alone, however, these records of just a few words are far from conclusive evidence of any kind of meaningful linguistic contact with the Portuguese as it is possible that the words could have been derived indirectly from Portuguese through the 'Portuguese-Malay' trade pidgin of the archipelago.

Although outside the immediate area of concern of this study, the claims for Portuguese words on the north coast of Western Australia are worth noting. One very important observation was made by Ryder in the 1930s in King's Sound on the Kimberley coast, although he mistakenly presumed the words to be Spanish.

One man who paddled round our vessel was finally coaxed near, and, strange to say, he dipped his hand over the side into the water, and said 'agua'. He was brought aboard and given water, and as he squatted down, I obtained a strange vocabulary from him. The words were written phonetically, and after I had pointed to the water and repeated his word 'agua', I pointed to his dog in the canoe, 'caningo', he repeated laconically. It seemed strange, for one could

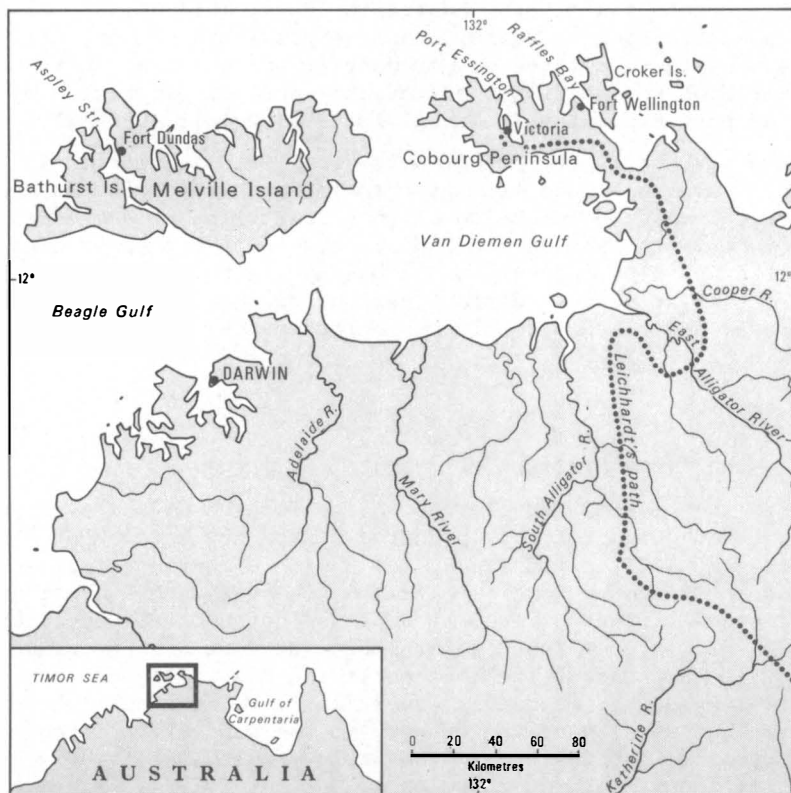
literally converse with this wild man. The word 'caningo' bore an extraordinary resemblance to canine and dingo. Other words I obtained in the brief time were 'apita', for his head, and 'oombooroo' for arm. A dead fish was 'mot' in his dialect, and in truth it is very 'morte'. I pointed to the mast of the vessel, and he grunted 'oobra'. I could not follow that until I realized with a shock that he pointed to the shadow of the mast. (Ryder 1936:33)⁶⁵

Von Brandenstein (1967, 1970) has noted that the word for turtle in some languages of the coastal Pilbara region of North-west Australia is *tartaruga* which is too close to the Portuguese *tartaruga* to be coincidental. Von Brandenstein (1970:618-621) also reports 60 other words, for most of which any Portuguese connection remains unproven. A few of them, however, such as *tabun soap* and *bula ball*, closely resemble words in Northern Territory coastal languages which are almost certainly derived from the 'Macassan' Pidgin. Walker and Zorc (1981), for example, list *ja:bu soap* and *bula* (used to designate a variety of round objects) as Austronesian loanwords in the Yolngu-matha languages. Given the case argued in the previous chapter that a major lexical source of the 'Macassan' Pidgin was the 'Portuguese-Malay' trade pidgin, it is not absolutely necessary to postulate a Portuguese presence in order to explain what appear to be Portuguese loanwords.

A similar position can be adopted with respect to Ryder's experience. The apparently Portuguese words may have been derived from the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin. Robinson (1973:299n11) reports that there is 'Malay' influence on the nearby Bardi language, and Baudin (1803:540) certainly met 'Malays' in the region in 1803. Words could have been borrowed from the language of these South-east Asian fishermen or traders or they could have moved along Aboriginal trade routes from areas which did have such contacts. On the other hand, the possibility cannot be ruled out that there was some linguistic contact between Aboriginal people in North Australia and the crews of Portuguese ships seeking trade items such as turtle shell or slaves. The discovery of what may be Portuguese cannon on the Kimberley coast may reinforce this point of view (Mulvaney 1969:36). All that can be concluded at this juncture is that if words of Portuguese origin which have been in use by Aboriginal people were derived from the Portuguese language, then they are yet more evidence of the long-standing acceptance by Aboriginal people of Australia's northern coasts of the necessity to devise means of communication with foreigners.

British Settlements on the Northern Coast, 1824-1849

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the British made three attempts at settling the Northern Territory coast (Wildey 1876:77) on Melville Island, at Raffles Bay and at Port Essington. All of them were born of Britain's trading and strategic interests in the South-east Asian region (Powell 1982a:45). Sufficient detail on these settlements will be provided in order that some assessment can be made of the social conditions which prevailed in them. In particular emphasis will be given to the nature of the relationship between the local Aboriginal people and the British settlers as this is of particular sociolinguistic significance. The settlement on Melville Island is sociolinguistically significant because no contact language emerged there. The settlements at Raffles Bay and at Port Essington are significant because contact languages did emerge.



Map 6: Northern Territory British Settlements and Leichhardt's Journey

The siting of these settlements was due in no small measure to the detailed surveys carried out by King between 1818 and 1819 (see King 1826) and who, as noted above, was possibly spoken to in Portuguese by Melville Islanders. As Davies (1926:28) commented:

The importance of these surveys by Lieutenant King are that they were in the hands of the Admiralty in London when it became essential that some settlement should be placed in the northern parts of Australia owing to, first, fear of the Dutch monopolising trade there as they had done in the Eastern Islands, and later, fear of a French settlement.

Historians still debate the real reasons for the establishment of these outposts (Allen 1967:111). Fear of an imminent French attempt to colonise North Australia has long been held to be the underlying reason for the first settlement (e.g. Wildey 1876:81). Most modern historians agree that the immediate reason was the desire to establish in the eastern Archipelago a trading port which could emulate the success of Singapore in attracting the trade of the western regions (Campbell 1912:86; Davies 1926:28-30; Powell 1982a:47). As Howard (1933:23) puts it, 'the predominating motives may be said to be commerce followed by national rivalry as a close second'. In particular it was initially hoped to develop trade relationships with the 'Malays' who

were already known to visit North Australia (Bauer 1964:29).⁶⁶ Prompted by the speculative exaggerations of Barns,⁶⁷ an ex-East India Company officer, and the enthusiasm of the Committee of Merchants trading in the East Indies,⁶⁸ the British authorities sought King's advice and were duly impressed by his description of Port Essington (Campbell 1912:86; Powell 1982a:47).

As a harbour, Port Essington is equal if not superior to any I ever saw; and from its proximity to the Moluccas and New Guinea, and its being on the direct line of communication between Port Jackson and India, as well as its commanding situation with respect to the passage through Torres Strait, it must, at no very distant period, become a place of great trade, and of very considerable importance.
(King 1826 [I]:92)

Fort Dundas – the first British Settlement

Earl Bathurst, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, appointed Captain J.J. Gordon Bremer to be in charge of the new settlement. Bremer set sail for Sydney in 1824 in the H.M.S. *Tamar* with a contingent of Royal Marines. He was joined in Sydney by some more troops together with two more ships and supplies. The small fleet arrived at Port Essington on 20 September 1824 (Powell 1982a:48). Bremer found water scarce at Port Essington and so, despite agreeing that it was 'one of the most noble and beautiful harbours imaginable ... a place worthy of his majesty's government', he remained long enough only to 'take formal possession of the country in the name of the King' (Campbell 1912:87). Bremer sailed instead to the narrow Apsley Strait between Melville and Bathurst Islands, reaching there on 27 September 1824. Finding some good water about eight kilometres inside the straits, Bremer chose a site on Melville Island for the first British settlement in what is now the Northern Territory (Campbell 1912:87).⁶⁹

Bremer named the military settlement Fort Dundas 'in honour of the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty'. In reality, it was a little outpost of fifty one soldiers and three officers, a few of their wives and forty four convicts. The story of Fort Dundas is a sad and sorry one. It was a singular failure (Bach 1958:222). Powell (1982a:52) recently summarised it thus.

They had much to endure, these men and women. 'Our little colony became very sickly', wrote Campbell sadly after burying six men in the month of January 1827. All but one died of fever, probably malaria imported by the crews of the ships which brought supplies from Timor. The fever came intermittently. Diseases of bad diet and poor hygiene were with them always – scurvy, night blindness, dysentery, hepatitis. The dank heat of the Wet oppressed them and its gales destroyed their crops. They recoiled from the endless alien forests, the mud and mangroves with their tormenting swarms of mosquitos and sandflies: and over all lay creeping fear of the black men.

Not only were the environmental conditions debilitating, but the settlement did not even get that boost to morale which it might have done had there ever been some visible evidence of its purpose. The Macassans never came (Bach

1958:228). Their normal route lay well to the north east of Apsley Strait (Powell 1982a:49). In fact one commandant, Barlow, even wondered if anyone in the Archipelago knew that Fort Dundas existed (Bach 1958:229).

The relationship between the garrison and the Tiwi people of Melville Island was always tense and sometimes violent. Officially, the members of the garrison were instructed to be cautious but to avoid angering the local people, and eventually to cultivate their friendship. Local regulations, while permitting fire-arms to be carried, insisted that they be used only in extreme emergency and that the Aboriginal people be unmolested.⁷⁰ The same cautions and requirements were extended to all visitors. The following extract is from the Extra Local Regulations of 1 October 1826.

Strangers are cautioned against Venturing into the Swamps or Woods in any part of Bathurst or Melville Island, as, owing to the Hostility and Treacherous cunning of the Natives, it would be highly imprudent to trust themselves among them unarmed or in small numbers. It is the wish of Government to cultivate their friendship if possible, and all chance of coming into collision with them is strictly forbidden; And any personal injury, violence or insult whatever, offered to the Natives, will expose to prosecution and be punished in like Manner and degree as in the case of Europeans or any other of His Majesty's Subjects. (HRA, III [6]:672-673)

An attempt was made on both sides at the very beginning to establish some kind of peaceful contact. Bremer's first report to Bathurst describes the earliest encounter.

On the 25th, having been a considerable distance in my boat, up a small River in Bathurst Island, I was surprised on my return by the appearance of ten Natives near the Entrance where the low tide had rendered the River fordable to a Sand Bank, situated in its Centre. They were armed with Spears, and had waded in a line towards this Sand Bank, and seemed at first disposed to dispute our egress; On our near approach they retreated, threw down their Spears into the Mud, and held up their Arms to shew us they intended nothing hostile, accompanying the action with loud and incessant talking, and vehement gestures. Being most anxious to establish an intercourse, I rowed towards them, but they retreated again to the Shore; after some time however they gained Confidence and at length came so near as to take a handkerchief and some other trifles which were put towards them on an Oar. I could not succeed in getting them nearer, and having given them all the boat afforded I left them, apparently well satisfied. (HRA, III [5]:785)

In retrospect, it is evident that this tenuous accord was doomed to fail. As Bremer's reports go on to show, aggressive acts on both sides began the same day and within a few days, the first Aboriginal man was shot. Tension and violence persisted on both sides, although it was two years before a British soldier was killed. Campbell, one of Bremer's successors, tried to initiate communication, once or twice entering into what he called 'palaver', whatever

that implies, but no accord was ever reached (Campbell 1834:154-155). The British considered the Tiwi an unpredictable threat to their outpost of colonial expansion. To the Tiwi, the British were unwelcome intruders and, as discussed earlier, it is probable that European slave traders had already predisposed them to be antagonistic towards foreigners. The consequences in terms of human relationships were inevitable.

There was also the same inevitability about the sociolinguistic consequences. The failure to develop even the most rudimentary contact language is hardly surprising. The only linguistic contact known to have occurred was the result of a plan by Campbell which he divulged to Colonial Secretary Macleay.

I have watched every opportunity of seizing some of that tribe since the Murder, but they are at present extremely shy and guarded. I certainly might have taken some of them by violent means since that time; but, as they are in a state of barbarous ignorance, I preferred endeavouring to seize one particular man, who appears to be their Chief and has been frequently observed directing them in some daring Acts of Violence, even previous to my arrival in this Island. I shall either secure this individual, or if opportunity offers get hold of a couple of young boys which sometime accompany them. By the latter plan, we might be enabled (by teaching them a little English) to acquaint them with our intentions towards them and convince those Islanders that every act of violence would be followed by severe retaliation. (HRA, III [6]:677-681)

Campbell's plan did not succeed. Neither the supposed 'chief' nor his associates were ever captured. Although one Aboriginal man was eventually taken, it was almost a year later (HRA, III [6]:700) and he escaped within a fortnight, carrying with him, it seems, the only English word which was ever acquired by the Tiwi in those years. The word was 'Fort Dundas'. Campbell (1834:158) did record what he took to be a few Melville Island words, although, as noted earlier, some were probably Portuguese in origin.

The ineffectiveness of the settlement at Fort Dundas as a commercial venture, the perpetual battle with the Tiwi, and the ravages of the environment, finally led the British authorities to order the closure of the garrison (HRA, III [14]:215). It was abandoned on 31 March 1829, the personnel being transferred to Raffles Bay. Almost all physical evidence of the fort has now disappeared. The four and a half years of exposure to the British had hardly affected the Tiwi. The memorial to Fort Dundas consists only of a few Tiwi stories and dances and in the word which only a linguist might now recognise but which the Tiwi know the British called their settlement — Punata, *Fort Dundas*.

A thought-provoking postscript was provided by Wilson who spent a considerable time at Raffles Bay and was able to gain first-hand information from ex-members of the Melville Island garrison who had been transferred there. Wilson (1835: 124-125) became convinced that there was more culpability on the part of the British than the reports and official enquiries showed. Wilson was certain that with some patience on the part of the British, no violence need have occurred.

Fort Wellington: the second settlement at Raffles Bay

Only two years after Fort Dundas had been established and before its abandonment was ordered, it was officially deemed to be a commercial failure (Wilson 1835:130). Earl Bathurst ordered a second attempt at Croker Island. The venture was placed in the charge of Stirling who, on 19 May 1827, sailed from Sydney in *H.M.S. Success* with three additional merchant ships carrying troops, convict 'volunteers' and supplies (Campbell 1912:90; Wilson 1835:130).

In June 1827 *H.M.S. Success* under the command of Captain James Stirling, arrived at Croker to establish the new settlement, but finding there no good anchorage and little water, Stirling moved across to Raffles Bay on the mainland nearly opposite. There, on 18 June, he founded Fort Wellington on a low shore fronted by drying reefs and mudbanks. Almost everyone who came after him thought Port Essington a better site, but Stirling stayed as close to Croker Island as he could, for the sake of Bathurst's instructions and also, it seems, because he was impatient to leave the north coast. His thoughts were on the Swan River Area. On 23 July 1827 he left Raffles Bay to become, within two years, a founder of Western Australia. Captain Henry Smyth, thirty men of the 39th Regiment, fourteen marines, twenty-two convicts, a Malay interpreter and his son, a surgeon, a storekeeper, two women and five children were left behind to build a village. (Powell 1982a:49)

Although Stirling described Smyth as 'a gentleman of good sense, great zeal and experience'⁷¹ he exhibited neither good sense nor experience in his relationships with the local Aboriginal inhabitants of Raffles Bay (Powell 1982a:52). As Smyth's own diary entries show, theft by the Aborigines, almost exclusively of a petty nature, enraged him right from the beginning and his response was always to attempt immediate physical retaliation, although initially without success.⁷²

On a few early occasions, Smyth did attempt some friendly advances towards the local people, giving and receiving token gifts (13 and 14 July), demonstrating the use of a gun (15 July) and accepting their assistance with mundane tasks such as scrubbing hammocks and blowing the forge. Smyth's shortlived patience gave out on 17 July after two Aboriginal men 'seized an axe and ran off'. Smyth noted on the same day:

I considered their faithless conduct did not deserve lenity, and I ordered the several sentries to fire when they approached.

This instruction set the tone for the remainder of Smyth's regime as commandant of Fort Wellington. Indeed, he was angered by others who acted in a friendly manner towards the Aboriginal people.

Friday, July 20th — Two of the natives, the men who had stolen the axe, had the assurance to come into the camp. Unfortunately, some officers of the *Success* received them in a friendly manner: it was my intention to have handcuffed one of them until his comrade brought in the stolen axe; however, I merely showed my displeasure at

their conduct, and ordered them out of the camp to fetch it. At a few yards distance, one of them, with a look of expressive contempt of me, took up a frock from the ground, and away they both started, in the face of the whole camp. A pursuit took place, but they ran too fast for us. The frock, however, was dropped in the flight.

Some further light is shed on this particular incident by Duncan, assistant surgeon of *H.M.S. Success*, who also recorded his observations in his Journal (see Wilson 1835:145).

An axe was shown to them similar to the one they had stolen some days before. And, being informed that they would not be allowed to come into the camp until they returned the stolen axe, the chief grinned at Captain Smyth, and showed his posteriors in rather an indecent attitude, then ran off, picking up in his way some of our people's clothes. In attempting to escape he was fired at by Mr. Carr, but without effect. A dog pursued him and made him drop his prey.

We may be amused at Smyth's euphemism ('a look of expressive contempt') for what Duncan describes as 'showing his posteriors'. As Wilson, a later commentator, shows, Smyth's other euphemisms were less trivial. Wilson, a navy surgeon who was shipwrecked in Torres Strait, eventually made his way to Raffles Bay in June 1829. He was critical of Smyth's attitude and actions towards the local inhabitants. Although he arrived after Smyth had left he collected and recorded eyewitness accounts of events. His account of the incident described above indicates, for example, that the man who 'stole' the axe may have had some reason to presume he could have it. The account also indicates how Smyth 'showed his displeasure'.

It appears also that they soon became on intimate terms with the sailors, - assisting them in their various occupations, - until unfortunately, 'after having seen and tried its use', one of the natives ran away with an axe. Who, knowing their habits, could be surprised at such an action?

A few days afterwards, Wellington⁷³ came to the camp, when he was given to understand that the stolen axe must be returned, which was undoubtedly very proper; but "*est modus in rebus*", there might have been a milder and more persuasive method of communicating the demand than by holding an axe in one hand, and catching the Chief by the back of the neck with the other. It is not to be wondered at, that Wellington, being thus treated, should have expressed his indignation rather indecorously. (Wilson 1835:147)

It is a pity that Smyth, like so many other intruders both before and after him in Australia, allowed his indignation at pilfering by the Aborigines to dominate his reactions to them. From this point on the Aborigines were fired at indiscriminately whenever they were seen and a cannon loaded with grapeshot was used against them if they approached the camp itself. It is also a pity that Smyth did not read the obvious signs that, from the outset, the Aborigines

did not intend any violence towards the British. He regularly reported their failure actually to harm anyone but failed himself to read the significance, even when a lone soldier or two 'escaped' from a hundred armed Aboriginal men.

... June 24th ... one of the party being a little in the rear of the others, was chased by a number of natives with spears (about seventy or one hundred) who fled on his reaching the party.

... July 17th ... two soldiers followed them near to their general assembly, when a large body came out with spears, and with much difficulty the soldiers escaped.

The diaries of both Smyth and Duncan record two events which, taken together, should have made Smyth reconsider his attitude to Aboriginal people. On July 17 a ship, the *Mary Elizabeth*, arrived having picked up a Portuguese man, Paul de Sois, who had been shipwrecked in the Cape Flinders area and had lived safely with the Aboriginal people of that district for seven years. If this incident, which admittedly took place elsewhere, did not suggest to Smyth that Aboriginal people did not necessarily harbour ill will towards strangers, an incident which occurred at Raffles Bay itself a few days later should have done so.

On the evening of the 20th July, the same day in which Smyth humiliated Wellington over the matter of the stolen axe, Thompson, a soldier from *H.M.S. Success*, went missing. This was just a few days before the departure of *Success*. Search parties were sent out without avail and finally *Success* sailed without him. It was feared that Thompson had been killed by the Aboriginal people. However, some time after the *Success* had sailed, he was escorted back to Fort Wellington by a group of them. As Wilson commented:

After these occurrences, it is somewhat astonishing that the seaman missed the same evening from *H.M.S. Success*, was not massacred by the natives in revenge for the insult offered to the Chief, instead of being accompanied by them in safety to the camp. (Wilson 1835:147)

The importance of this gesture seems to have been lost on Smyth who continued to order Aboriginal people to be fired at indiscriminately. Although it is certain that some were injured, it appears that none were actually killed up to this point. Finally, after some months, the Raffles Bay Aborigines committed what Wilson (1835:148) regarded as their first (and perhaps only) real act of aggression. A soldier was speared near the garrison (HRA, III [6]:776), although he eventually recovered from his injury. Smyth ordered an immediate reprisal, the details of which can no longer be compiled. Official reports and records of detailed evidence at subsequent enquiries 'describe' the event or at least provide the perspective and details which the European participants were prepared to disclose.⁷⁴ Wilson, a few months later, tried to piece together the true account of the reprisal.

A party of the military (and, I believe, also of the prisoners) were dispatched in search of natives. They came unexpectedly on their camp at Bowen's Straits, and instantly fired at them, killing some, and wounding many more. A woman, and two children, were amongst the slain; another of her children, a female, about six or eight years

old was taken, and brought to the camp, and placed under the care of a soldier's wife. After this, the natives kept aloof from the settlement ... (Wilson 1835:148)

It seems likely that Wilson suspected but could not determine the extent of the massacre, but Sweatman, in 1843, believed the deaths to be as high as thirty (Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977:135). Thus was created an atmosphere of tension and fear between the British settlers and the Raffles Bay Aborigines. The pattern of mutual mistrust, into which Smyth had guided the situation, persisted after Smyth's departure in April 1828, following which Fort Wellington was briefly in the charge of Smyth's deputy, Lieutenant Sleeman (HRA, III [6]:794). All evidence seemed to indicate that there would be at Raffles Bay a repetition of the disastrous experiences on Melville Island.

Linguistic contact appears to have been minimal throughout this period. In the first few weeks of the settlement, some attempts were made to barter or exchange gifts, but the communications seem to have been pantomimed. During the early days of Fort Wellington, a few of the Aboriginal men were permitted to join in some of the tasks such as cleaning, stoking the furnace and felling timber. It is likely that on these occasions, a few words may have been spoken both by the British and by the Raffles Bay people. Several of the more prominent Aboriginal men were given English nicknames, including Wellington, who was presumed to be their leader and whose real name was Mariac. After the first few days of the garrison's arrival, however, opportunities for any further development of verbal communication ceased.

The pattern of avoidance and suspicion and therefore of negligible linguistic contact, which was begun early in Smyth's term as commandant, persisted after he left until the arrival, on 13 September 1828, of Captain Collet Barker as commandant. Under Barker's influence, the whole atmosphere was to change dramatically.

It only took Barker a day or two to assess the situation, and according to his diary,⁵ he issued an order on 18 September that guns were not to be used 'without absolute necessity'. This effectively reversed the instruction issued by Smyth fourteen months previously and not long after the garrison was established, that sentries were to 'fire whenever they approached' (17 July 1827). On 24 September, Barker noted that he had

Addressed the men on the importance of avoiding any cruelty towards the natives in case of falling in with them at any time and any violence towards their women and children.

Barker had obviously ascertained some of the real facts of the massacre in the previous year and alluded to it in his address, stating that he might conduct an enquiry. He stressed that in future, force was not to be used against the Aborigines unless they instigated physical violence first.

Barker was clearly intent on redressing the wrongs of the past and establishing a friendly relationship with the local people. Two months were to pass before he was able even to begin to do so and his diary up to that time records every small piece of evidence of the presence of Aboriginal people, a reflection of his anxiety to meet them and prove his goodwill towards them.

His first opportunity did not come until 25 November and it was finally the Aboriginal people who made the first gesture of peace. One of the garrison stockmen, Costello, encountered a group of them a short distance from Fort

Wellington. They signalled their peaceful intentions by sticking their spears in the ground. Motioning Costello towards them, they presented him with a gift of a basket. On Costello's return, Barker responded with alacrity.

I went out with him immediately taking with me two handkerchiefs and a pair of scissors. Davis took some bread with him ... We endeavoured to make ourselves understood by each other in a friendly way for some time. They seemed to make signs that a man of ours was with their people a long way over the bay and went through the motion of a flintlock, pointing to the place and going through the motion of rowing. They would not come to the camp but seemed to wish we should accompany them. I did so for a short distance but having eaten nothing this morning and making out from them that we should have a long way to go, I explained to them as well as I could that I would accompany them tomorrow morning and they went from me. (Barker's diary 25 November)

This little transaction was an event of critical importance, with consequences which continued long after Fort Wellington had disappeared. Linguistically it was of little immediate significance. Indeed, it was in many ways a perfect example of miscommunication. Only sign language appears to have been attempted, and even that was misunderstood by both sides. Barker's reading into the signs that the Aborigines had knowledge of his missing soldier turned out not to be the case. The Aborigines did not understand, either, that Barker intended to accompany them the next day.

Something infinitely more important had been communicated, namely the desire for peace. That night, with feelings of both excitement and apprehension, Barker put his affairs in order in preparation for going out alone with the Raffles Bay Aboriginal people.

Closed and signed all the men's accounts for fear of any accident happening to me tomorrow as it will not be without risk that I accompany the natives but I consider the object justifies some risk. (Barker's diary 26 November)

They had not, however, understood each other and so Barker did not meet up with any of the Aborigines the next day. There was no contact for another week until Barker was around the bay in a small boat.

As we were running along the shore some natives were discovered. We made friendly signs to each other and I ran the boat in and landed unarmed, desiring every one also to remain in the boat. On our approach to the beach the natives retired some distance from it evidently in a little alarm. I advanced to where I supposed them to be and soon fell in with one who seems to be the chief. We exchanged presents, I giving him a handkerchief and he giving me a spear unheaded and the stock for throwing it. He had perhaps taken off the head. He also gave me a string of beads made of a kind of cane. I shewed him a basket which I had taken with me and explained that it was given me by one of his people. I asked for Wellington, when he pointed to himself and repeated the name.

They looked in the basket apparently for bread pronouncing a word something like it but I was forced to tell them I had none but that I would give them some if they came to the settlement. (Barker's diary 2 December)

At last, Barker's diary records on 7 December that Mariac and Iacama together with some other men approached Fort Wellington with considerable trepidation. On seeing the sentries, the other men fled, and Mariac and Iacama would have done the same had not Barker showed extreme friendliness and given them some gifts. It was finally a child who allayed their fears. Wilson (1835:74) recorded the incident.

Captain Barker ... used every endeavour to induce them to come into the camp, but without success, until a little child, belonging to one of the soldiers, went and led in the Chief, Wellington, by the hand. He was evidently under great alarm, looking back frequently, and addressing himself to Waterloo, his *fidus Achates* who kept in his rear.

Barker showed them around the garrison and recorded in his diary that they were amused at a small monkey 'and also at a pig which they called often as "Big" seeming unable to pronounce the "p"'. They were quite overcome when they saw the young girl, taken during the massacre.

On discovering the little native girl, both Wellington and Waterloo evinced great emotion, particularly the latter, who was on that account, believed to be her father. Seeing her so well taken care of increased their confidence; she was then named Mary Waterloo Raffles, but her native name was Rivalal.⁷⁶

After this occurrence, the intercourse with the natives was renewed, and, as Captain Barker used every precaution to prevent their receiving injury or molestation from any individual in the camp, it continued unbroken ... (Wilson 1835:74)

Barker's own diary and Wilson's eye witness accounts of his residence at Raffles Bay, record in considerable detail Barker's indefatigable efforts to establish and maintain an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence between the garrison and the local people. He continually demonstrated his trust in them in a variety of ways. Not long after Mariac and Iacama's first hesitant re-entry into Fort Wellington, Barker had his longed-for opportunity to accompany them alone which he did for a whole day. On another occasion, he decided to remain with them overnight, against the advice of other members of the garrison. Mariac obviously regarded this gesture as a reciprocation of his visits to the settlement and responded appropriately to his guest.

A short time before I arrived, Captain Barker had paid a visit to the natives, placing himself under Wellington's care, who seemed not a little flattered by such a mark of distinction. Dr. Davis accompanied him a little way into the woods, and then endeavoured to persuade him to return, representing his expedition to be dangerous and foolhardy. He, however, was not deterred from his undertaking, but gave the Doctor permission to go back, if he felt at all uncomfortable: the Doctor took him at his word, and returned

to the settlement, where every one lamented the rashness of the Commandant in trusting himself with such a set of savages; more especially as they knew that the said savages had ample cause for retaliation.

These unfavourable surmises were not realised, as Captain Barker was treated with the greatest attention and kindness. Wellington would neither accept of any present himself, nor would he permit any of his followers to do so, although, when in the camp, he was constantly begging for something. In the evening, they prepared a mess of fish, which they had speared, and were highly delighted to perceive Captain Barker partake of it. In travelling, whenever they came to a stream or marsh, one of the natives, named Marambal, insisted on carrying him over.

Next day, he returned to the settlement in safety, to the great joy of all our people, who thenceforth, began to consider the natives in a more favourable light than they had hitherto done. (Wilson 1835:179-180)

Barker was also scrupulously careful and honest in the matter of property. On one occasion, for example, he recorded in his diary (12 November) that he found a spear in the mangroves. He started to carry it home but 'recollecting that they might perhaps have put it there for future use I returned it after carrying it some distance and put it in the same place'. This contrasts markedly with Smyth's diary of his actions such as that on 22 June when a party of Aborigines were disturbed about a mile from the garrison. When they fled, they left two spears and a woomera behind which Smyth's men took. A few days later, however, on 2 July, the situation was reversed. A party of sailors left some tools behind when frightened off by a group of Aborigines. When the Aborigines took some of the tools, Smyth was angered and ordered an armed pursuit. He was clearly oblivious to the fact that the Aboriginal people's actions were virtually identical to his own.⁷⁷ Barker on the other hand, demonstrated his confidence in Mariac to the point of lending him a canoe.

Captain Barker informed me he had lent Wellington a canoe for a fortnight, and that no person in the settlement believed it would ever be returned. Dr. Davis, who still viewed the natives (and particularly Wellington), with a prejudiced eye, was quite confident that he would never again visit the settlement; or if he did so, that he would make some excuse for not returning the canoe.

In the evening of the 30th, Wellington the native chief, with a number of his tribe, visited the settlement and brought back the canoe. I was much pleased at this occurrence, as it established the position that Captain Barker and myself firmly maintained, viz. that the natives were not such rogues as they were reported to be; and that they were "more sinned against than sinning". ... Next morning Captain Barker made him a present of the canoe; but it was some time before he could believe that it was a gift: it is needless to say how highly gratified he was by such an acquisition. (Wilson 1835:80, 86, 87)

Barker also demonstrated his goodwill and fairness of mind in various formal matters. When complaints were made against the Aborigines, he did not automatically presume that the Europeans could do no wrong. On the other hand there was one occasion when an Aboriginal man, Luga, was discovered in the very act of stealing a canoe. He was arrested by the sentry and next morning he was tied up and given what Wilson (1835:76) termed 'a quantum of corporal chastisement'. A large body of Aborigines gathered after Luga's arrest but on his release they obviously accepted that justice had been done. Indeed, it transpired later that Luga himself bore no grudge (Wilson 1835:80).

In the social sphere, Barker demonstrated his willingness to treat the Raffles Bay people as social equals. They were allowed on occasion to sleep within the garrison and encouraged to perform dances for the entertainment of all at the Fort. In response, Barker entertained Mariac and the other leaders in his home where they all waltzed and danced the hornpipe to the tune of the ship's fiddle (Wilson 1835:87-100).

It is fortunate that Barker's original diary still survives. Together with Wilson's first-hand observations, there is a full and detailed account of a remarkable year of cross-cultural bridge building. As Powell (1982a:53) has recently commented,

In only a year spent at the settlement, he transformed race relations, mainly through the force of his own personality and tremendous courage. He treated the Aborigines with consistent tact and respect... The black men responded with trust equal to his own and spread word of him beyond their own lands.

In a visit, for example, to Croker Island, people whom Barker had never met mobbed him, calling out 'Commandant! Commandant!' (Wilson 1835:103). It is interesting to note that Mariac was careful to explain to Barker that he, too, was a 'commandant' among his own people. Without in any way minimising Barker's remarkable contribution to the creation of peace, it should be borne in mind that Barker left all sorts of written records, including a detailed diary whereas Mariac obviously did not. It is nevertheless clear that Mariac's contribution and efforts at peace-making were also significant, even if largely unrecognised.

All things seemed to augur well for the future of Raffles Bay as a commercial enterprise. Not only was peace established between the British and the local people, but the gardens flourished, health and morale at the garrison improved markedly, and the Macassans came — thirty four praus in 1829, manned by more than a thousand seamen (Macknight 1976:130-131). Thus it was an unbelievable shock to Barker when he was ordered to abandon Fort Wellington in August 1829. Ironically, during all of Barker's year of immense effort to create success out of disaster, the gloomy forebodings of previous commandants and the British Government's subsequent orders to abandon the project had been crossing the seas between Australia and Britain and back again. Barker even contemplated disregarding his orders but finally he did what he considered to be his duty.

Captain Barker (who was in charge when these orders came) hesitated some time before he decided to obey them. It appeared evident to him that the Home Government had acted solely from the unfavourable information they had hitherto received; and had they been aware that, at the present

moment, the settlement was in so flourishing condition, and that there was every reason to suppose the desired object was on the point of being obtained, these orders would have been gladly countermanded.

I say, he hesitated some time; but, recollecting that "obedience is better than sacrifice", he carried the orders into execution, though with extreme reluctance. (Wilson 1835:172)

One of Barker's last acts was to show his Aboriginal friends around the settlement gardens and to explain to them about the different fruits and vegetables which were shortly to be theirs. On 28 August, Barker recorded in his diary that he and the last sentries embarked and 'abandoned the settlement to Wellington'.⁷⁸

Language contact at Raffles Bay

Very little has been said so far about language, but a great deal has been said about communication. The forming of a peaceful relationship between the Raffles Bay Aborigines and the garrison at Fort Wellington through the efforts of Mariac and Barker was a very significant event. It was shown in Chapter 3 that in a language contact situation, the nature of the contact and the attitude of the groups to communication with each other are factors of critical importance in determining any subsequent linguistic development.

Both Barker and Wilson made efforts to record the substance of what was communicated or on some occasions, what they thought was communicated. They did not, however, say much about how the communication was achieved. The situation was unusual. Whereas it had, in common with many colonial contexts of the era, the potential for all the problems which normally seem to have been associated with the clash between 'settlers' and 'natives' — and, indeed, Fort Dundas and the early months of Fort Wellington were typical of such situations — the person and attitudes of Barker injected a real difference into what finally happened at Raffles Bay.

The development from pantomime to conversation took some months. As has been noted already, the earliest communications between Barker and Mariac and the other Aborigines were in sign language as the following quotation from Barker's diary of 7 December 1828 shows.

I also enquired respecting the white men in a boat as I fancied they might have seen our Crown Prisoners who might possibly be still on the coast and I partly suspected they had seen them but I could make out nothing positive. It is a great drawback having no interpreter ... I think if we could have conversed together we should be able to ... make whatever intercourse we might have with them friendly and pleasant to both parties ... The natives told us very clearly that they would return in one or two days, Miago pointed to the sun place about 4 p.m. ... I half fancied as they were going off that they made signs they would bring back a white man with them.

It transpired that the pantomimed communication was quite unsuccessful. Within a few weeks, Barker describes attempts at verbal communication, the success of which he is still unsure. This discussion comes from Barker's diary of 20 January 1829.

Wellington and Marimbal first appeared and then went back and brought seven others ... Wellington was spoken to about his behaviour to Leary (whom he had threatened) which he seemed to understand and earnestly disclaimed any bad intention ...

In a formal report, a month later, Barker expressed his concern with the lack of verbal communication (HRA, III [6]:826).

One of our greatest difficulties is the want of knowing each others language, for I feel convinced they are a well disposed people and that, if we could clearly explain to them the line of conduct we expected, we should find them very tractable.

After some months had passed, both Barker and Wilson recorded events in which it is obvious that verbal communications, sometimes of some complexity, were engaged in and were understood. This event from Wilson, is a typical example.

We visited Mr. Radford's grave, and Wellington appeared to be a good deal affected, when he understood who was buried there ... He was very particular in his inquiries as to the names and rank of others buried near the same spot; and on returning, we overheard him explaining these particulars to other natives. (Wilson 1835:93-94)

Thus, all that can be unequivocally claimed is that by the end of Barker's year at Raffles Bay, verbal communication was being achieved. The precise nature of those communications cannot be so categorically determined, although a considerable amount can be inferred from the evidence Barker and Wilson provide (J. Harris, 1986).

There was some English in use. At least initially, Barker and the British would have had to use some English, but it is also evident that Mariac and the other Aboriginal people also learnt and used some English. Some of the more specific evidence is enumerated below:

1. Even before Barker's arrival, Mariac and Iacama knew the English names they had been given. 'I asked for Wellington, when he pointed to himself and repeated the name' (Barker's diary 2 December). Other Aborigines were also given English nicknames, e.g. 'One-Eye', 'Waterloo'.
2. Barker was addressed as 'Commandant' by the Aborigines (as he no doubt was by everybody else). This word had, in fact, spread further afield than Raffles Bay and was known by people who had never met him. Barker actually records Mariac's pronunciation. 'Wellington was very earnest with me in explaining that ... as he was chief of all, he was *commandan*' (Barker's diary 22 January).
3. Barker records non-English pronunciations of other words such as bread and pig.⁷⁹
4. Some conversations, the topics of which are recorded, demand the interpretation that some English was being used. In, for example, the discussion noted

above about the graves, Mariac's queries regarding the names and ranks of the deceased people surely demanded an answer in English and even the question would seem to have demanded the use of English.

A particularly important consequence of Barker's attitude to the Raffles Bay people was his attempt to learn what he thought was their language, an attempt which other members of the garrison emulated. It is not surprising to find that the Raffles Bay Aboriginal people attempted to speak English, or a modified version of English if that is what was presented to them. It was certainly an universal feature of European colonialism that the colonised people learnt the language of the colonisers or at the very least acquired a pidginised version of it. It is, on the other hand, exceptional to find the colonisers having the example of their leader attempting to speak the local language.

With respect to Raffles Bay in 1828, however, it is not easy to determine just what language it was that Barker thought he was learning. It will be shown later that the language used twelve years later by Aborigines trying to communicate with the settlers at Port Essington was the 'Macassan' Pidgin. This being so, and given that some of the Raffles Bay Aborigines were also later at the Port Essington settlement, it would seem logical that the same trade language may have been employed when the Aborigines tried to communicate verbally with members of the Raffles Bay garrison. Before considering this further, the small amount of actual linguistic data is given below.

1. Both Barker and Wilson mention the frequent requests by Aborigines for various items which they named such as mambrual *cloth* and ley-book *hatchet*.
2. Many of the Aboriginal people's names are recorded and obviously used by everybody, e.g. Monanoo, Luga, Miago, Olobo, Marambal.
3. Barker collected Aboriginal words with the specific intention of communicating more effectively. Wilson (1835:315-321) has recorded portions of these lists. Barker even sent his word list to the Colonial Secretary (HRA, III [6]:827).
4. The tribal divisions and affinities of the various Aboriginal people were widely known.

In this part of the coast, the natives are divided into three distinct classes, who do not intermarry. The first and highest is named Mandro-gillie, the second Man-bur-ge, and the third, Mandro-willie. (Wilson 1835:163)⁸⁰

Barker and Wilson frequently record the use of these terms in conversation but they appear also to have been in general use. One of the soldiers, for example, teased Mariac by calling him a Manburge (Wilson 1835:120).

5. Wilson records some of his own attempts to communicate with Mariac, quoting some local words, e.g.

Tuesday, August the 4th, Wellington, accompanied by a native, paid another visit to the camp: to-day his first word was "Mambrual", and the second "Miago mandrowillie" He was gratified by my saying "ee,ee", and was then presented with a shirt, when he begged that Miago should not receive anything. (Wilson 1835:93)

Despite the limited amount of data, it is obvious that words of local origin were in use in the communications between Aborigines and settlers. It is also reasonable to assume that more words were in use than those which happen to have been recorded. Unlike the later experience at Port Essington, however, very few words appear to be derived from South-east Asian languages.

The only three words definitely in this category are in Wilson's word list (1835:315-321). Two of these Wilson acknowledges as 'Malay' — Marege(e), the Macassan term for the Aboriginal people (and for their country), and lipe lipe *canoe* derived from the Macassan term for canoe, lepalepa, widely found in coastal Aboriginal languages today (Walker and Zorc, 1981:122). The third word is mungedera, clearly derived from the Macassan term for themselves 'Mangkasara', but which Wilson claims was used at Raffles Bay to designate an item of clothing, no doubt in the Macassan style.

Although further research remains to be done, no other words have yet been shown to be of South-east Asian origin. In particular, this applies to the words most likely to have been related to a 'Macassan' trade language, such as the terms for known trade items. Wilson (1835:315-321) provides the terms mambrual *cloth*, ley-book *hatchet* and mure mure *knife*. No similar words semantically related have so far been found in the literature and, furthermore, there are distinctly different South-east Asian (Austronesian) loanwords in modern Aboriginal languages which denote the same items. In their study of loanwords in the Yolngu-Matha languages of Northeast Arnhem Land, Walker and Zorc (1981) list ja:ricari *cloth*, dakul *axe* and la:ti *knife*.⁸¹

The presence, therefore, of only a very few South-east Asian loanwords in the recorded examples of words used in communication at Raffles Bay suggests that the 'Macassan' Pidgin was not the language with which the Raffles Bay Aboriginal people endeavoured to speak to the British. It is, in support of this claim, significant that Barker communicated in what he termed 'Malay' with the visiting prau captains and specifically recorded their observation that there were Aboriginal people further east who 'spoke a little Malay' (Barker's diary, 2 April; 11 May). Barker's efforts to communicate with the local Aboriginal people were so concerted that it seems highly likely that had they wanted to use the 'Macassan' Pidgin, he would eventually have recognised its relationship with Malay.

It is possible that the Raffles Bay people did try to use the 'Macassan' Pidgin prior to Barker's arrival, and that during the first few weeks of the garrison, when some communication occurred, they discovered that it was not understood by the British. A more plausible possibility is that considerable changes had occurred during the decade between the end of the garrison at Raffles Bay and the establishment of the garrison at Port Essington. There are hints here and there in Barker's Raffles Bay diary that the number of praus which visited the Cobourg Peninsula area in 1829 was considered by the trepangers themselves to be exceptionally high, seeking perhaps more fully to exploit the region. Certainly they were delighted to find the possibility of British protection on the peninsula and returned the following year in force, only to find that the British had gone. It is possible that they may not have been daunted by this and may have begun to establish a more peaceful communication than that which seemed to obtain before the British garrison at Raffles Bay imposed a temporary truce. Certainly there is evidence that whereas the presence of Aborigines from the Gulf of Carpentaria on praus returning to Macassar via the

Cobourgh Peninsula, was a matter of surprise to the local people in 1829 (Barker's diary, May 7), by the 1840s, travelling to Macassar from the Cobourgh Peninsula appears to have been commonplace (Sweatman in Allen and Corris, 1977:144).

Another possibility is that the particular Aboriginal people with whom Barker had most contact at Raffles Bay were not those who dealt with the trepangers. Relations between the Aborigines and the trepangers at Raffles Bay appear, according to Barker's diary, to have been strained, even violent. As discussed in the previous chapter, there were undoubtedly differing degrees of contact between Aboriginal people and the trepangers. Aborigines of some regularly-visited localities developed amicable relationships whereas other groups or even other families with much less personal contact did not develop such relationships at all and may have therefore had less competence in the trade language.

Whatever the reason, the information available at present indicates that despite the unarguable use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin in attempts to converse with the British at Port Essington, it was not used in such attempts at Raffles Bay. Rather, the local people appear to have used their own vernacular and this is what Barker and the others tried to learn and to use.⁸² The best conclusion which can therefore be drawn from the available evidence is that a mixture of English and the local Aboriginal vernacular was the means of communication between the British and the Aborigines at Raffles Bay. Predictably, no sustained conversations are recorded. Wilson (1835) records two short sentences. Miago mandrowillie obviously meant *Miago (is a) mandrowillie* (p. 93). The only other sentence was part of a longer conversation beside Radford's grave.

We visited Mr. Radford's grave, and Wellington appeared to be a good deal affected, when he understood who was buried there, repeatedly uttering in a plaintive tone, "Mute commissaree ande".

As Radford was the 'commissariat officer' or storeman, it is obvious that the word commissaree is derived from English. In his word list, Wilson (1835:320) gives mute *good* and ande *dead*. Thus, Mariac's lament was in a mixture of the local vernacular and English and can be roughly translated as *(the) good storeman (is) dead*.

It appears that the era of communication at Raffles Bay under Barker was too short to enable a stable pidgin to develop. Indeed, given the degree of communicative equality that seems to have characterised the situation, the eagerness on both sides to learn each other's language and the reasonably small numbers of people involved, the contact language which was beginning to develop may eventually have been based on both languages had the settlement not been so hastily abandoned (J. Harris, 1986). Wilson (1835:89) probably came closest to describing the nature of the language when he referred to Mariac's speech as 'great vehemence of jargon and gesture'.

The most important factors are that there was verbal communication and that this communication spanned a larger range of subjects and was more personal and amicable than is normally said of communication between settlers (or invaders) and natives. This good-humoured encounter was typical.

Shortly afterwards we met Wellington and Wooloomary, pretty heavily laden with empty bottles, and with iron hoops; which, they did not fail to inform us, had been given to them as presents.

After a little friendly chat we separated — Wellington having promised to bring his wife and children to see us before we left his territory: he said she would have visited the settlement long ere this, had she not been very ill with the oyie boyie (*small-pox*). This excuse of ill health was (as frequently occurs in civilised society) mere pretence; as, on it being remarked to him, that most likely all the yalcuhee (*women*) were labouring under the same complaint, he and his companions laughed heartily. (Wilson 1835:112-113)

In the long-term, the linguistic significance of this type of communication between Europeans and Aborigines lay not in the nature of the contact language itself but in the positive attitude to communication of which it was the product. This attitude survived and determined the atmosphere in which communication was to recommence ten years later at Port Essington.

Victoria, the third settlement at Port Essington

After the two unsuccessful attempts at settlement, interest in the idea of a military or trading post on Australia's far Northern coast waned for some years. In 1836, however, George Windsor Earl,⁸³ traveller, linguist, and authority on South-east Asia, re-opened the discussion in 1836 in response to approaches by Chinese merchants (Spillett 1972:16-18). Despite initially negative reactions, Earl persisted. He found an ally in Barrow at the Admiralty (Allen 1972:349). When the decision was finally made to resettle the north coast, it was not a matter of trade but of demonstrating occupancy to the Dutch, the French and even the Americans (Powell 1982a:54). As Barrow himself put it 'it would be a most humiliating mortification, to witness the tricoloured flag, or that of the Stripes and Stars waving over Dampier's land' (Quoted in Allen 1969:319).

In 1838 an expedition was fitted out in England to resettle the north coast. The expedition, consisting of the ships *Alligator* and *Britomart*, sailed from Plymouth on 19 February to Sydney where the full complement of marines embarked. In Sydney, the *Orontes* joined the expedition, largely to carry pre-fabricated buildings. Additional freight was also carried on the *Essington*, which was hired for that purpose, and on the *Lady Kenaway* and the *Canton*, both on their way to India. This expedition left Sydney for Port Essington on 18 September 1838 (HRA, I [19]:589), under the command of Captain (later Sir) Gordon Bremer, first commandant of Fort Dundas, Melville Island (HRA, I [19]:247).

The *Alligator* entered Port Essington on 27 October (Spillett 1972:19-26; Powell 1982a:54-55). A site was chosen 26 kilometres inside the harbour. Named Victoria, the garrison consisted of Bremer, Captain John McArthur and his son, thirty six marines, a botanist, a surgeon, Earl (linguist and draftsman), three women and two children (Powell 1982a:54). Knowing the sorry state of race relations at Fort Dundas and Bremer's obvious lack of skill in establishing a friendly relationship with the Melville Islanders during his

brief commandancy there, the choice of Bremer as commandant would not appear to have augured well for relationships between the garrison and the Aboriginal people of Port Essington. Such a prediction, however, would have failed to take into account the legacy of Barker and Mariac's successful efforts at establishing happy communication at Raffles Bay ten years earlier. The Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal people's enduring belief in the essential goodwill of the whites made a vast difference between the beginnings of the earlier settlements and the beginnings of Victoria.

The cargo-carrying *Essington* was actually the first ship of the small fleet to arrive at Port Essington. Bremer in the *Alligator* did not arrive until ten days later, but Earl was with Bremer and, fortunately, Earl recorded his earliest observations of the Port Essington people's response to their arrival.

As we approached Point Record, the extremity of the low tongue of land which forms the chief shelter to the inner harbour, the *Essington* schooner was seen riding at anchor within a cable's length of the beach, where a number of natives were also encamped; and we now discovered the reason of our not having seen any before. Several were perceived on the deck of the schooner, dressed up in all sorts of fantastic finery which they had obtained from the crew.

While passing the schooner *Essington* to enter the inner harbour, Mr. Watson, the master, had come on board, and reported that he had arrived about ten days previously. The natives had been very friendly, and had afforded material assistance in landing the frame of the church, which had been deposited on the beach above high-water mark. (Earl 1846:33-34)

This scene could hardly have differed more from the suspicious and tense beginnings at both Fort Dundas and Fort Wellington. Barker had taught the local people that Europeans could be trusted and, in fact, Bremer was thought to be Barker returning.

As the canoe neared the ship, both the men stood up, and the elder made a short speech, the purpose of which, as may be imagined, was perfectly unintelligible to us ... The elder, whose name was Langari, singled out Sir Gordon Bremer the moment he came on board, and delivered a long address, shedding many tears, and frequently touching his shoulders with both hands in a sort of half embrace. From his repeatedly pointing towards Raffles Bay, and making use of the term "Commandant" in a tone of endearment, it appeared that Langari, who had been a frequent visitor at our settlement at Raffles Bay, had mistaken Sir Gordon Bremer for Captain Barker, the last commandant there, to whom the natives had been very much attached. (Earl 1846:34-35)

Stokes (1846 I:393) in reporting the arrival of the expedition in Port Essington, stated that 'one of the Raffles Bay tribe instantly made himself known on the arrival of the expedition in the Bay'. Stokes gave this man's name as *Marambari* which is almost certainly the man *Marambal* so frequently mentioned both by Barker and Wilson. As Mariac ('Wellington') and Iacama

('Waterloo') are not mentioned by Stokes, nor in any subsequent writings relating to Port Essington, it must be presumed that they had died.

Even allowing for the confidence born of the memories of Barker, the rapidity with which the Aborigines established a friendly relationship with the members of the new garrison was remarkable. Within a few days, the ship's surgeon, Wallace, writing in the journal of *H.M.S. Alligator* on 30 October 1838, was able to report that guards hardly seemed necessary. The Aborigines were generally friendly, following the soldiers everywhere and sleeping beside their tents. Some had already started to take up permanent residence on the beach in order to barter fish, crabs, and oysters for biscuits and clothing (Spillett 1972:30). The French explorer, Dumont D'Urville was particularly impressed by the obvious accord.

As for the natives, the English seemed to worry very little about them. In the six months since they had set up their tents on the shore, the inhabitants had shown only the most peaceful intentions.

(English translation from Macknight 1969:98)

The only problems seem to have been in relation to pilfering of minor articles, and Bremer fortunately appears to have adopted a relatively lenient view of such minor offences. Bremer left in 1839 and was replaced by Captain John McArthur. He was said to be a 'pragmatic old fogey' who ruled by the book (Huxley 1935:149) and Stanley described him as a 'litigious old fool' (Lubbock 1967:229). Nevertheless, Earl was able to report that by 1844 McArthur

had succeeded in establishing a system which has brought civilised man into close communication with the savage without any of those violences which usually attend the mingling of such opposite ingredients, and which rendered the course of events in the settlement an uninterrupted flow of harmony and goodwill between the native tribes and their visitors. (Earl 1846b:70-71)

The one truly serious confrontation occurred in 1847 when some Aborigines were arrested for theft and one of them was accidentally shot by a guard while attempting to escape. Perhaps in order to preserve their peaceful co-existence with the garrison, this death was avenged not by killing a white but by spearing Neimnal, an Aboriginal man who had chosen to live at and be identified with the garrison (MacGillivray 1852:155-156). The consequence of this was feuding between the Aboriginal groups involved and not, ironically, between the Aborigines and the garrison. As Spillett (1972:148) notes, the commandant, McArthur, was greatly distressed by the whole issue, particularly in view of the long period without violence. The guard was committed for trial at the Supreme Court in Sydney where he was finally acquitted.

This seems, to have been the only truly potentially damaging event. Writers and observers at the time generally emphasise the remarkably happy relationships. Sweatman, for example, who visited Victoria in *H.M.S. Bramble* described in his Journal how he swam and played with the women and children and generally had what he termed 'pleasant life' and 'great fun' with them (Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977:130). 'The people appear to be really amiable' wrote Bremer to his wife not long after he arrived (Lubbock 1976:91).

Indeed there is much evidence of compassion and charitable work by the members of the garrison among the Aborigines in times of need. The shipwrecked priest, Father Angelo Confalonieri, lived among the Aborigines and learnt their languages. When they were struck by an epidemic of influenza in the dry season of 1847 — incidentally, a variety of virus to which the whites appear to have had a degree of immunity — the commandant, surgeon and many others worked hard to alleviate suffering and reduce the death toll with all the resources at their disposal (see Spillett 1972:144-145).

Spillett summaries the relationship between the Aborigines and the garrison in these words:

The Aborigines now lived in greater confidence and there prevailed good relations between them and the men of the garrison. They brought fish, crabs and oysters in exchange for clothing and bread and rice. They began to realise that any transgressions were punished in the same way as that meted out to white men. They would come to the surgeon for treatment to their eyes and all manner of other complaints. They had even started bringing their grievances to McArthur as dispenser of justice, to right their wrongs ...

They were beginning to appreciate McArthur's interest in their well being. He was sorry to see them copying the habits of the marines by smoking tobacco; he was generally interested in helping them and improving their living conditions. (Spillett 1972:81-82)

'Smoking tobacco' was the least of the problems, if such it could be called, arising from long-term association with the Europeans. Disease and social disruption were among the more tragic legacies of their acceptance of the Europeans. Keppel (1853:162), captain of the *Meander* noted the birth of half-caste children but that only one was 'allowed to survive'. Owen Stanley, who was captain of the *Britomart*, was present at the foundation of the settlement. He found the local people friendly, courteous and healthy. As captain of the *Rattlesnake*, he was also present at the end of the settlement.

The Aborigines plight was tragic. These once childlike and harmless creatures had been utterly corrupted by the vices of civilisation, and their numbers decimated by venereal disease, addiction to alcohol, and tobacco. In addition, the presence of the settlement had led to the intensification of their tribal feuds. Neinmal, or Jacky White, Owen's friend, had been killed in one of these quarrels, shortly before the arrival of the *Rattlesnake*, and the tale was told to Owen and MacGillivray (who also knew this faithful and intelligent blackfellow well) by a native who had witnessed the murder.

'More deaths will probably follow before the feud is ended' said MacGillivray. 'I may add' he asserted with reason, 'that the natives of Port Essington have little to thank the white man for'. (Stanley quoted in Lubbock 1967:229)

In 1849, Victoria went the way of Fort Dundas and Fort Wellington. It was not so much a failure as an anachronism. Only a few shipwreck survivors ever found their way there and trade languished. The British government never seriously pursued the concept of free enterprise and land occupation, but then none of these things were the real reasons for the existence of the garrison at Port Essington. It was more accurately what Allen (1972:342) terms a 'strategic manoeuvre'. As Powell (1982a:57) points out, the Dutch and the Americans showed no interest in North Australia. The French turned up in the region from time to time and the garrison may have deterred them. By 1849, however, no nation could seriously doubt the British claim to the whole of Australia and their presence on the coast was no longer needed. When it was learnt that the new steamships were going to ply a route far away from Port Essington, the orders were given for its abandonment.

McArthur and the last of the garrison were picked up by *H.M.S. Meander* on 30 November 1849. As *Meander's* log of that day shows, everything serviceable was uplifted and much of what remained was burnt (see Spillett 1972:168). The ruins were left for the Aborigines to salvage and the white ants to devour. Some stone foundations and chimneys and a few graves are still visible today. With respect to race relations on the Cobourg Peninsula, Earl looked back in 1863 and summed it up thus:

The garrison (at Raffles Bay) enjoyed good health and, after a time, established friendly intercourse with the natives of which we experienced the benefit when the establishment was formed at Port Essington, where friendly relations were never once interrupted.
(Earl 1863:34)

Language contact at Port Essington

Linguistically, the situation at Port Essington was distinctly different from that which prevailed at Raffles Bay. The sociolinguistic situation at Raffles Bay had been one of minimal language contact until the arrival of Barker. Then the situation had changed to one in which an understandably reticent group of Aboriginal people and an aggressive group of European intruders were brought together amicably by the painstaking and diplomatic efforts of their leaders, Mariac and Barker. Part of this process can be attributed to Barker's enthusiasm to learn and use Aboriginal words.

On the other hand, at Port Essington, the British were instantly welcomed by a large number of confident Aborigines who immediately associated with them and their activities. As has been reported many times before in Australia's history, the Aborigines were not only the more eager to acquire the other party's language but appeared to be much more adept at doing so⁸⁴ (Curr 1887:2; Dixon 1980:69; Brandl and Walsh 1982:76-77).

As already described, at least the word 'commandant' was remembered by some people from the Fort Wellington period at Raffles Bay ten years previously and almost certainly a number of other words. One of the more thought-provoking survivals from the Raffles Bay era was social rather than linguistic, a quite remarkable sense of ease and common politeness – remarkable, not because culturally different people should not be courteous to each other but because

such courteousness was rarely reported, presumably because social distance was maintained. It was certainly a matter of surprise to Bremer when he first arrived and he commented upon it in a letter to his wife

... in this intercourse with each other (they) display a kindness and attention which would honor a more polished society; nor are they by any means deficient in natural politeness. They never fail to introduce a stranger of their tribe to us, and endeavour to give him our names. They never leave us, when they go into the woods to sleep, without *individually* saying "Goodnight" which they utter as plainly as we can.

(Bremer quoted in Lubbock 1967:91-92)

Owen Stanley, captain of the *Britomart* which remained at Port Essington for a brief period after delivering personnel and equipment for the founding of the settlement, recorded how immediately the local people attempted to incorporate him and his ship into their own relationship system. As noted earlier, this had been done at Raffles Bay and the Aboriginal people may well have therefore expected the captain to understand the significance already.

Their division into castes is worthy of notice. They are as jealous of their rank as a proud Duke of Somerset. The first class is called "Mandro-gillie"; the second, "Man-burgee"; the third "Mandro-willer". The first never fail to introduce themselves accordingly, and they constantly keep alive their dignity by placing their hands first on my shoulders, and saying, "Commandant, Mandro-gillie--Eo (I) Mandro-gillie, pointing to themselves. They name their inferiors in the same way, and so perfectly acknowledged is the rank, that the others always admit it, saying, "Ee, ee. (Yes, Yes.)" Their quickness is astonishing. We had not been here a week before they discovered that the *Orontes* was not like us. They ceased to visit her, observing with considerable contempt, that it was a "mandro-willer" ship.

(Stanley quoted in Lubbock 1967:92)

Apart from a few English words remembered by those Aboriginal people who had been at Raffles Bay and the expectation that the British, too, would remember their relationship system, the first attempts at verbal communication by the Port Essington people were in the 'Macassan' Pidgin. This point was emphatically made a number of times by Earl, a competent linguist.

You ask for vocabularies. I am in the most ridiculous perplexity about them. After having collected many words, I found that I was making a vocabulary of a horrid *patois* of the Macassan dialect: in fact, nearly all the words the natives use when speaking with us are Macassarese ...

(Earl 1842:140)

Earl later admitted that he had at first thought that the 'horrid *patois*' was the primary language of the local people, only later realising that it was their attempt to converse with foreigners in the trade language of the archipelago.

A very considerable portion of the coast natives have, from frequent intercourse with the Macassan trepang fishers, acquired considerable proficiency in their language ... On our first arrival, the natives, from having been long accustomed to address strangers in this language, used it when conversing with us, and the consequence was that some vocabularies were collected which consisted almost entirely of this patois, under the supposition that it was the language of the Aborigines. (Earl 1846:244)

The shipwrecked Roman Catholic priest, Father Angelo Confalonieri and a few others studied the local Aboriginal language but unlike Raffles Bay, there is little evidence that it was ever used generally in communication between the two groups. It appears that an English-based pidgin arose much more rapidly than any Europeans could acquire a local language and in any case, the local people chose to attempt communication in the 'Macassan' Pidgin, the lingua franca of their international dealings.

It is evident from Earl's writings that the 'Macassan' Pidgin continued in use for some time, perhaps several years although it is now impossible to determine whether or not this only applied eventually to Earl and others who understood what they called 'Malay'. It is also evident that an English-based pidgin finally arose and that it began to develop soon after the arrival of the garrison. Assisted, perhaps, by memory from some of the English words used at Raffles Bay and by skills of rapid language acquisition, it is evident that within three days of the arrival of the first ship, an English-based pidgin was already emerging. Earl, for example recorded the following incident on or about 30 October 1838.

Mallamaya ... was caught one evening after dark in the very act of stealing a shirt ... he was dragged by his captors to the tent ... and presented before Sir Gordon Bremer for judgement ... The prisoner spoke very energetically in his own defence, making a most elaborate use of the few English words that he had picked up, and Sir Gordon Bremer, thinking the fright he had endured would be sufficient punishment ... allowed him to depart. (Earl 1846:42-43)

By February 1840, McArthur reported that the Aboriginal people could speak some English but that no whites spoke their language. By 1841 Stokes (1846 [II]:357) described the contact language of Port Essington as 'such few words of broken English as were then used at the colony'. In speculating about the nature of the target language initially presented to the Aborigines, it is significant that the marines had already spent a considerable time in Sydney where an English-based pidgin was spoken. After a few more years it was becoming frequently recorded that some Aboriginal people spoke what was recognisably English (e.g. Keppel 1853:158; Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977:44). Apart from the word 'commandant', the first word recorded anywhere in the literature so far located is piccaninny in Sibbald's journal (1843).

The Aborigines' contact language had changed in two years from the attempt to speak the 'Macassan' Pidgin which was not understood by any of the British with the possible notable exception of Earl, to the use of an English-based pidgin understood by both groups. It is tempting to suggest that what may have occurred was a relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin. As argued in Chapter 2, the idea that relexification is part of the origin of all pidgins is too

simplistically wide but the proposition that some languages have changed their lexical affiliation almost completely, is essentially correct (Koefoed 1979:52). This matter will be discussed in detail later in this study.

There is one piece of real evidence for the relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin. This development in a temporal dimension was observed by the explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt, in a spatial dimension as he progressively approached Port Essington. In November 1844, his expedition to discover an overland route from the southern states to Port Essington was nearing its end. Over 300 kilometres away from their destination, they began to encounter Aborigines who were familiar with whites. On 27 November, Leichhardt recorded the following sentence:

'Perikot, Nokot, Mankiterre, Lumbo Lumbo, Nana Nana Nana'.
(Leichhardt 1847:495)

At the time Leichhardt did not understand the words, but after he had reached Port Essington, he was told that they meant *'very good, no good, Malays very far'*. The first two words were obviously derived from English although Leichhardt recorded the changed phonology. The remaining words were derived from the 'Macassan' pidgin. They are fully discussed in Chapter 9. It is also interesting to note that Leichhardt actually used some 'Macassan' terms in his first verbal communication with these Aboriginal people, who spoke some English words he recognised. He was able to communicate with them verbally even though their knowledge of English words beyond the few they repeated was inadequate, because Leichhardt had a word-list obtained from Port Essington, including 'Macassan' place-names.

... a fine native stepped out of the forest with the ease and grace of an Apollo, with a smiling countenance, and with the confidence of a man to whom the white face was perfectly familiar. He was unarmed, but a great number of his companions were keeping back to watch the reception he should meet with. We received him, of course, most cordially; and upon being joined by another good-looking little man, we heard him utter distinctly the words, "Commandant!" "come here!!!" "very good!!!" "what's your name?!!!" If my readers have at all identified themselves with my feelings throughout this trying journey; if they have only imagined a tithe of the difficulties we have encountered, they will readily imagine the startling effect which these, as it were, magic words produced — we were electrified — our joy knew no limits, and I was ready to embrace the fellows, who, seeing the happiness with which they inspired us, joined, with a most merry grin, in the loud expression of our feelings. We gave them various presents, particularly leather belts, and received in return a great number of bunches of goose feathers, which the natives use to brush away the flies. They knew the white people of Victoria, and called them Balanda, which means nothing more than "Hollanders"; a name used by the Malays, from whom they received it. We had most fortunately a small collection of words, made by Mr. Gilbert when at Port Essington; so that we were enabled to ask for water (obert); for the road (allun); for Limbo cardja, which

was the name of the Harbour. I wished very much to induce them to become our guides; and the two principle men, Eooanberry and Minorelli, promised to accompany us, but they afterwards changed their minds. (Leichhardt 1847:502-503)

Progressing north, Leichhardt encountered many different groups of Aboriginal people. By 10 December, he was able to record connected speech in an English-based pidgin, the first true Pidgin English sentences thus far located in materials relating to the Northern Territory.

They examined everything, but made not the slightest attempt to rob us even of a trifle. When the women returned at night, they did not bring "Allamurr", or, as it was here called, "Murnati", but plenty of "Imberbi", the root of Convolvulus, which grow abundantly in the plain: they gave us a very reasonable supply of it, but would not taste our dried beef, which they turned, broke, smelled, and then with a feeling of pity and disgust returned to us. Nyall gave an amusing account of our state: "You no bread, no flour, no rice, no backi — you no good! Balanda plenty bread, plenty flour, plenty rice, plenty backi! Balanda very good!" (Leichhardt 1847:522-523)

On 15 December, within two days walk of Victoria, Leichhardt found communication even easier.

Here we heard the distant cooees of natives, which we answered, going in their direction, until we came to a camp, in which we found an old lame man, "Baki Baki", and a short sturdy fellow, "Rambo Rambo"; both of whom knew a great number of English words, and were quite familiar with the settlement and knew the Commandant, Mr. Macarthur. They promised to guide us the next morning to Balanda, after having made many inquiries about our stock of provisions and of tobacco. I made my latitude $11^{\circ} 26' 18''$, by an observation of Regulus; which, allowing a possible error of a few miles, confirmed me in my belief, that we were at the head of the harbour; particularly as Baki Baki had told me that he had come this very morning from the settlement. (Leichhardt 1847:531)

In a more condensed version of his journal, Leichhardt described, as he approached Port Essington, the change from communication by gesture, to the use of 'Macassan' place names, to the mixture of English pidgin and 'Macassan' pidgin to the full use of an English-based pidgin.

At the head of the South Alligator, black fellows came up to us, and we exchanged presents with them; they gave me the red ochre, which they seemed to consider as the best of their run. At the commencement of the plain, a large tribe of black fellows came to our camp, and one of them pointed to the north-west, when we asked where he got his tomahawk and a piece of shawl from. They knew Pitche Nelumbo (Van Diemen's Gulf). At the big Pandanus Swamp another tribe of black fellows guided us over the swamp, and behaved very kind. They used the words peri good (very good), no good, Mankitterra (Malays). At the mouth

of the East Alligator, Eooanberry's and Minorelli's tribe were equally hospitable and kind. We met another tribe in travelling up the river, and at its head. The latter were however noisy, boisterous and inclined to theft. At the north bank of the river we met Bilge's tribe, Bilge being the most important personage amongst them. At Nywall's Lagoon, Nywall treated us with imberbi (the root of a species of convolvulus), and two black fellows guided us two days further. At Montmorris Bay⁸⁵ we met Baki Baki; and at Raffle's Bay, Bill White's tribe, and Bill White himself, guided us into the settlement.

At Eooanberry's tribe we first heard the question, "What's your name", and the name for white men "Balanda". At Nywall's tribe, they asked for flour, bread, rice, tobacco, and one of them had even a pipe. It is difficult to express our joy when English words were heard again, and when every sign which the black fellows made proved that we were near the end of our journey, particularly as December advanced, and the setting in of the rainy season was to be expected every moment. (Leichhardt 1846:31-32)

There was clearly differential command of an English-based pidgin by Aboriginal people of the Port Essington region, depending on their degree of contact with the settlement. As Sweatman observed, some of the Port Essington Aboriginal people became quite close associates of the British, a few even going as far afield as Sydney and gaining considerable proficiency in English. Sweatman commented on this fact.

They are fond of travelling about and frequently go in the Bughese prahus to Macassar. Several have also visited Sydney in merchant vessels, the "Heroine" had no less than five on board, who, McKenzie said, were among the best sailors he had and one, Jack White, was so active & well behaved that he actually intended giving him the rating of "tindah" (Boatswain's mate) next voyage. When the "Fly" left Pt. Essington in 1845, a youth named Neinmil accompanied McGillivray as a sort of servant, half protegee, and remained on board till she sailed for England, when he joined us for a passage back to his native place. He was a good looking boy, and from his good temper and obliging disposition became a great favourite on board both ships. He soon learnt to speak English as well as we did, was a capital shot, a good singer, clever fisherman and a most amusing companion in a cruise ...

(Sweatman in Allen and Corris 1977:144)

Keppel, captain of the *Meander*, actually recorded some examples of this differential use of English and/or an English-based pidgin. He encountered someone from Port Essington while on his way there

While working up the Australian coast, we were boarded by a canoe with a crew of six of the veriest looking savages I had yet beheld; one of them, wearing a pair of trousers, the only article of apparel among them, announced himself, in tolerable English, as one of the tribe attached to the settlement at Port Essington.

Keppel also recorded two separate pieces of communication which took place somewhere away from Port Essington on hunting trips. He obviously recorded the first because of his amazement at the English-speaking ability of the man accompanying him. The communication in the second example was less grammatical on both sides.

When riding through the jungle on a shooting excursion, I gave my gun to a naked savage to carry: I was rather astonished at his addressing me in very good English with "should an opportunity offer, sir, I shall fire!". This man was frequently with me afterwards. One day he said to me "If you English could thrash Bonaparte whenever you liked, why did you put him on an island, and starve him to death?" (Keppel 1853:158)

They will not bear to be hurried. If, feeling hungry and tired and knowing the direction, you take the lead yourself, your guide will sulkily follow and allow you to go wrong, or to pass the place he knows you are anxious to arrive at: and when at last you inquire 'where settlement?' with a disdainful look he points towards the place from which you have been travelling the last two hours ... you say to 'Darkey', "what for you do this?" he replies "what for you take guide in bush?" (p. 183).

By 1849 when Victoria was abandoned, it is clear, therefore, that there was an English-based pidgin in use and that some Aboriginal people had command of the English language as well. For nearly twenty years, there was no permanent European settlement in the Northern Territory. One of the more fascinating aspects of the language-contact history of the region is that during these years, English or an English-based pidgin, survived in the Port Essington area. Indeed, Port Essington was probably not totally cut off from the English-speaking world after the abandonment of the British garrison. As the friendly attitude of the local Aboriginal people was generally known, it was a likely stopping-place for some of the increasing number of private ships plying the north Australian coast, as well as for more official vessels. The *Yatala* ran aground while visiting Port Essington harbour in 1864 (Manhood 1966:202). Francis Howard, on the survey schooner *Beatrice*, visited the Cobourg Peninsula several times. In 1866 at Mountnorris Bay, not far from Port Essington, Howard reported that 'the natives were very friendly. Several spoke English and remembered the names of people at Port Essington' (Howard 1866:1). Bob (or Robert) White, a Port Essington man, was taken aboard the *Beatrice* as an interpreter (Howard 1866:1) and his services were sought by later vessels (Cadell 1868:10). Keppel (1853:190) described him as 'the intelligent savage' and 'one of those who spoke good English'.

The important issue of the continuity of English-based speech at Port Essington will be resumed in a later section of this study.

The inbetween years, 1850-1864

Between the closure of Port Essington in 1849 and the commencement of the Escape Cliffs venture in 1864, there was no European settlement of any kind in the Northern Territory. The only Europeans in the region were a few explorers who passed through on horseback or who visited by ship. As noted, one

explorer, Leichhardt, actually completed an overland journey while Port Essington garrison was still there.

Whereas the British had long expressed strategic and commercial interest in Australia's northern coasts, Australian interest was first made apparent only after the establishment of the Port Essington settlement. In 1840, Governor George Gipps began formally to promote his long-standing ambition to develop an 'overland route to Asia', which in reality meant an overland route to Port Essington.⁸⁶ The concept soon gained considerable popularity (see, for example, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 September 1843), but a large official expedition in 1845 under Thomas Mitchell failed to find it (Favenc 1888: 152-161). On the other hand, the small private expedition under Ludwig Leichhardt which had set out on 1 October 1844, did reach Port Essington on 17 December 1845 (Leichhardt, 1847:532). Their encounters with Aboriginal people in the Cobourg Peninsula region speaking both the 'Macassan' Pidgin and Pidgin English, were discussed earlier in this chapter.

A few weeks prior to this and several hundred kilometres to the south, John Roper, a member of Leichhardt's expedition had climbed a hill and spotted 'a green valley with rich vegetation' (Leichhardt 1874:439). This was the river which was to be named after him. Two days later, Leichhardt's party reached the Roper River itself, immediately observing signs of permanent Aboriginal occupation

Natives seemed to be numerous; for their footpath along the lagoon was well beaten; we passed several of their fisheries, and observed long fishtraps made of *Flagellaria* ...
(p. 443)

Leichhardt did not actually meet any of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the area until 21 October when he was near the junction of the Hodgson and Roper rivers. Despite Leichhardt's nervous use of firearms (p. 446), the Aboriginal people, who were particularly numerous, were obviously friendly (Bauer 1964:39; Morphy and Morphy 1981:4).

After Leichhardt and between the abandonment of the British settlement at Port Essington and the establishment of the South Australian government settlement at Escape Cliffs on the Adelaide River, the only officially recorded Europeans in the Northern Territory were explorers by either land or sea. Those who came by land were generally seeking hitherto unexplored regions. They did not therefore follow Leichhardt's path as far north as the Cobourg Peninsula and so did not encounter any Aboriginal people with whom they might have been able to communicate verbally. The expeditions of Gregory and Stuart did, however, pass through the Roper River area.

Augustus Gregory's expedition left Sydney by ship on 18 July 1855. They were put ashore in the Victoria River on the western side of the Northern Territory from where they trekked eastward to the Roper River and south-east to Queensland. Apart from some rare hostilities, they frightened away most of the Aborigines they encountered (Gregory and Gregory 1884:103, 104, 132, 170, 185, 189). When they did try to establish communication, they either failed (p. 150) or had limited success with gestures (pp. 112, 158)

While at our dinner (Victoria River) a native approached the bank of the river and came to us and a parley commenced which was rather unintelligible and when he found that he

could not make himself understood by words, resorted to the language of signs and expressed his contempt of us in an unmistakable manner (p. 112).

It is interesting to note in Gregory's journal the common practice of attempting to use Aboriginal words learnt in one place to communicate with Aborigines in another place (Gregory and Gregory 1884:158).

John McDouall Stuart crossed Australia from south to north, from Adelaide to Van Dieman's Gulf in 1862. He too failed to communicate with the Aborigines from time to time (Stuart 1865:380) but he seems to have made the effort, with a degree of success, to communicate by gesture or 'dumb barter' at the Roper River (pp. 373, 378), at the Katherine River (p. 416), and at Daly Waters (p. 432). In one noteworthy encounter, he was of the opinion that an English word was used by an Aboriginal woman near the Roper River.

As we were saddling, one native man and two women made their appearance and came close to the camp. Mr. Kekwick and I went up to them; the man was middle-aged, stout and tall, the women were also tall, one especially. Their features were not so coarse as those we had seen before — a very great difference between this fellow and those I saw on the source of the Adelaide River. The man made signs that he would like to get a fishhook by bending his forefinger and placing it in his mouth, imitating the method of catching fish. I gave him one with which he was much pleased: I also gave a cotton handkerchief to each of the women; one of them no sooner got it than she held out the other hand and called out "more, more, more;" with that request I did not feel inclined to comply. (Stuart 1865:422)

Stuart may, of course, have been mistaken — after all, he only heard what was in effect a single syllable repeated. He may, on the other hand, have heard correctly. It has, for example, been shown that even before actual contact with English-speaking Europeans, English words had diffused beyond the areas of contact to 'the other side of the frontier' (Reynolds 1981:11-12). Such words generally referred to European people themselves, to their animals or to their artifacts. A request for 'more' seems to indicate prior contact of some kind. The woman may, for example, have been as far north as Port Essington or she may have encountered the Leichhardt or Gregory expeditions. It is even more likely that she had had some contact with whites in the Roper River itself or one of the other nearby rivers flowing into the Gulf of Carpentaria. There had already been a number of officially recorded ships visiting the nearby coast and no doubt an even larger number of unrecorded vessels. Gregory, for example, when awaiting his own ship in the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1856, found unmistakable evidence of a party having recently come ashore at the same location from another vessel (Gregory and Gregory 1884:172). Roper River people, by pantomime, told Cadell (1867:5) of a long-bearded white man living in the region. He could have been Classon, a member of Leichhardt's ill-fated third expedition of 1848. This last expedition was to cross Australia from east to west by a circuitous northerly route, skirting the desert (Grenfell Price 1939:16) but the party and their large flocks disappeared without trace (Cotton 1938:269). It was claimed in 1871 by Hume that Classon was still alive near Newcastle Waters, living with the Aboriginal people and refusing to come out of the bush (Ashwin 1927:78-81).

A minor but intriguing possible source of English words, at least on the coast, was the fact that quite independently of the movement of English-speakers within Australia, some Aboriginal travellers encountered English words in their voyages with the 'Macassans'. The reality of such voyaging has been discussed in detail in Chapter 4 but it is certain that some Aboriginal travellers had opportunities to go much further afield than Macassar itself and there are Aboriginal accounts of such exotic items as elephants and snow. Although some regard such accounts as the telescoping of more recent travels with 'Macassan' travels, it is nevertheless unarguable that Aboriginal people, as crew members of 'Macassan' praus, travelled extensively in South-east Asia. A prospecting expedition around the Arnhem Land coast in 1875 encountered an Aboriginal man in Arnhem Bay who

had been to Macasser and Singapore with the Malays and had a great admiration for those places, knew the points of the compass in Malay and even spoke a few words of English ...
(Lorance 1875:13 Oct.)

None of these matters are of any enduring linguistic significance and for fifteen years after the British abandoned the garrison at Port Essington, contact between Aboriginal people and speakers of English in North Australia was both fleeting and discontinuous. Perhaps a word or two became sufficiently well-known to merge into the widespread English-based pidgin which was to develop later in the century, but this can not be proven to have occurred. It is certain, however, that at Port Essington and in the region surrounding it, some English was remembered and, when the necessity arose, used. The truly widespread development of English-based pidgins, however, had to await permanent European settlement.

Disaster at Escape Cliffs

Stuart had been fortunate enough to travel through the Northern Territory during a good season. His descriptions, even of normally arid parts of the centre, were glowing and by the time he reached the 'Top End' his lyrical praises knew no bounds (Chapman 1950:23-31). Stuart's euphoric descriptions, or perhaps, as Powell (1982a:71) points out, the misuse of his descriptions by others, were a major factor in the efforts of the South Australian government to acquire the Northern Territory, which had been nominally part of New South Wales. The British Government approved the annexation of the Northern Territory to South Australia on 6 July 1863 and the Northern Territory Bill, providing for its colonisation, became law on 12 November the same year (SAPP 70/1863).

This was to be a commercial venture, a settlement by free land-holding settlers in true South Australian tradition. Land sales opened simultaneously in London and Adelaide on 1 March 1864 and the first 250,000 acres were sold, not only sight-unseen but location unknown (Powell 1982a:78). The party chosen to select and survey the site of the new settlement appear to have been highly unsuitable, from the leader, Boyle Finniss, down to the labourers (Donovan 1981:48-49). From a number of options, Finniss appears to have chosen the least suitable site at Escape Cliffs, just inside the mouth of the Adelaide River which Powell (1982a:79) describes as 'islands in a sea of mangrove and paperbark swamps' where 'extensive reefs and shallows keep shipping far

offshore and the turbulent rock-strewn Narrows is passable only at the turn of the tide'. The town was to be named Palmerston but its full survey was not even completed.

Despite instructions to seek and maintain friendly relationships with the Aborigines (SAPP 36/1864:3), there was little attempt genuinely to carry out this instruction. The local Aboriginal people, generally referred to in writings last century as the Woolna or Woolner tribe, afforded Finniss every opportunity to set a pattern of peaceful accord. When Finniss arrived near the mouth of the Adelaide River, his ship, the *Henry Ellis* stuck fast on a sandbank. He then rowed across to the *Beatrice*, which had been anchored there for twenty three days. The officers of the *Beatrice* reported that they had

... been sixty miles up the Adelaide River which they described in glowing terms, as a noble River, and they had been visited by the natives who were very friendly.

(SAA Finniss papers 1863-69:70/292/3)

They had, in fact, entertained the Aborigines with songs and dances on the deck of the *Beatrice* (SAPP 18/1865:3). Despite this, a pattern of hostility soon emerged. Like the establishment of Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay and many other European settlements in Australia and elsewhere, any possibility of rapport ended when the local people infringed some European code of behaviour - in most cases the commission of petty theft.

From the time the expedition landed in July the natives had been friendly and inquisitive. At first the men invited them into their tents, gave them presents and bartered weapons for flour. Once the novelty wore off, however, the keen interest displayed by the natives in the white men's activities became annoying. Attempts to keep the aboriginals at a distance failed and after some of the warriors helped themselves to the flour supplies it was decided to post guards to keep the natives away from the camp. (Manhood 1966:206-207)

Finniss seems to have been even more angered by interference with such items as buoys and flags, even when these were remote from the camp, maintaining the totally unrealistic expectation that the local people should respect such things even in the absence of those who naively erected them.

The blacks ceased to be troublesome till about a fortnight back, when they cut down a station flag which I caused to be erected at Point Ayers both as a survey mark, and as a beacon for shipping on entering the harbour. I immediately started in my boats with a party to beat up their camp and take possession of their canoes until they made restitution, but they had all fled up the River with their canoes, where it would take weeks to find them.⁸⁷

At this time, the expedition had not yet shifted from their first temporary camp to the final Escape Cliffs site. One day when Finniss himself was away exploring the future site, some Aborigines again entered the camp and stole some flour. Acting in the spirit of Finniss's instructions, the men at the camp decided to take matters into their own hands. They mounted a punitive expedition just before dawn the next day, attacking a nearby Aboriginal camp.

During the attack, Alaric Ward, one of the labourers, killed an Aboriginal man in circumstances which sound strange, even in the manner which Ward himself chose to describe it

A native now approached me with a spear, whom I dodged round a tree; I fired at him with a revolver, but missed. I pulled again but the pistol missed fire; I said, "All right, old fellow" he said, "All right, old fellow;" the third time I fired he fell ... I considered my life to be in danger when I fired. (SAPP 89/1865:9)

A rapidly convened court-hearing in Finniss's absence was largely staged to discredit Finniss by attributing the whole affair to his strategically unwise choice of camp-site and his extended absence from it. Finniss soon became paranoid about the dangers the Aboriginal people posed to the expedition and particularly to himself. He had a stockade constructed and then a substantial private residence for himself which he sited in the middle of the camp so as to be protected by the tents of the other men (Manhood 1966:215). Like Smyth at Raffles Bay, he did not attach any significance to the fact that the local Aboriginal people had not attacked the whites, despite the fact that he considered them 'numerous', 'treacherous', 'determined', 'warlike', and 'powerful' (SAPP 163/1864:2). He believed conciliation would serve no purpose (Manhood 1966:214).

Finniss's opinion was not shared by some of the other members of the expedition who believed that the best defence lay in friendly relations. At a later enquiry, Ebenezer Ward claimed that

... the treatment adopted towards the natives, in first encouraging their curiosity and then punishing them for it, was calculated to provoke the hostility they afterwards displayed. (SAPP 17/1866-1867:40-41)

In September 1865, the spearing of a horse prompted Finniss to mount a series of vicious punitive expeditions, some under the command of his son Frederick with, according to Lockwood (1968:23), instructions to 'shoot every bloody native you see'. It is said that some two hundred Aboriginal camps were burned (Hill 1951:84), but the death of only one Aboriginal man was ever acknowledged. According to Finniss he was 'a noted chief and thief, to whom (Finniss) had shown the greatest kindness' (Manhood 1966:218) but according to evidence at an enquiry, he was actually an unarmed old man with only a digging stick and a basket of yams who was shot in the leg while retreating (SAPP 89/1865:33). Hill (1951:84) has questioned whether it was a man at all as the stick and yams indicate a woman. At the later enquiry in Adelaide it was said that evidence was given that 'the poor wretch, riddled with bullet wounds, was finished off by a humane white man who placed the butt of a rifle on the dying creature's chest and leaned on it' (Hill 1951:84).

The Aboriginal people retaliated by carefully selecting Alaric Ward, the first man to kill one of them, as their target and spearing him, but this was possibly the last hostile act by either side. The volume of complaints reaching South Australia finally had their effect and Finniss was recalled.

I have caused a party to be specially dispatched to the Northern Territory, under the leadership of Mr. John McKinlay, to explore the country and report upon the best places for

settlement and the most suitable localities for a capital; and I have instructed the Government Resident to return to Adelaide, to explain, in person, various matters which it will be necessary to investigate. (SAPP 1865-1866:1-3)

At the enquiry in Adelaide, Finniss was condemned for gross mismanagement, dereliction of duty and aggression towards the Aboriginal people (SAPP 17/1866-1867:2). Some modern researchers consider that he suffered some degree of mental instability (Manhood 1966:218).

The small settlement remained in the charge of J.T. Manton. McKinlay arrived two months later to report on the situation. He said of Escape Cliffs that 'a greater scene of desolation and waste could not be pictured' (SAPP 1312/1865-1866:1). Concerning the site itself, he said that 'Escape Cliffs, in Adam Bay, is useless as a site for a city, in fact it has nothing to recommend it' (McKinlay, 1866:21). Of the shooting of Aboriginal people, McKinlay said that it brought disgrace not only on Finniss but on the whole colony.

The tiny settlement struggled on for about a year. The personality of Finniss dominated the story of Escape Cliffs. Even after he left, the protracted enquiry and parliamentary debates focused attention on him. As a consequence, no-one seems to have noticed the improvement in morale in general and in race relations in particular. Manton perhaps was no Collett Barker and the old 'chief' Mira (or Miry) may not have had the skills and influence of Mariac, but between the two of them, Escape Cliffs became a happier and healthier place with hints, at least with respect to rapport between the two groups, of what might have been. One has to read between the lines to glimpse that even during Finniss's time there was probably an unofficial rapport between the local people and some of the whites. Once Finniss had left and sanity could prevail, it seems to have taken very little time for a reasonably tension-free relationship to be established between the two groups. By November, the Aboriginal people had become regular visitors to the camp. By February, they were major providers of fresh food and also assisted in the work of the settlement and the two groups were living more or less harmoniously in close proximity to each other.

The official journal during Manton's time as leader was kept by Clement Young, the expedition's clerk and accountant. The activities of the Aboriginal people form a significant proportion of the journal and his daily entries from November 1865 to February 1866, although mostly brief and matter-of-fact, show the two group's growing acceptance of and co-operation with each. The following selections are typical:

- Dec. 12 : Several natives and lubras visited ... and appeared very friendly.
- Dec. 25 : Christmas day. Six natives visited us on this auspicious day, and were treated with every kindness, and bread, sugar, and even plum-pudding, in a small quantity, were given them.
- Jan. 4 : Natives came to camp, bringing their lubras, and remained all day.
- Jan. 13 : Natives and lubras at camp remained all night.
- Jan. 20 : Natives at camp. Dr. Millner attended one of them, who had been stung by a sting-ray.

- Feb. 10 : About seventy-five natives, lubras and picanninies, at camp all day, encamping about 100 yards from the stockade. Grand corroboree at sundown.
- Feb. 11 : Several of the natives and lubras went out fishing and hunting; they caught us some nice fish, for which we gave them bread and damaged flour, both of which articles they seem highly to appreciate.
- Feb. 13 : Several of the natives went fishing on the reef, and returned to camp loaded with all sorts of fish, also a beautiful shell which was presented to Mr. Manton. In the afternoon, two natives and a boy went with Messrs. Hood and Young to the Julia Creek to spear fish; one of them, named Goodietchy, caught about a dozen nice mullet. Some of the natives also made themselves useful in obtaining bark for roofing a verandah. Grand corroboree at sun-down. Some members of our party sang a chorus song or two which seemed to please our sable brethren amazingly.
- Feb. 14 : Several of the lubras were presented with print frocks which Mesdames Packard and Bauer kindly made for them.
- Feb. 15 : Bartering of fish for damaged flour was very brisk.
- Feb. 23 : In the evening, some red shirts and blue Guernsey singlets ... were issued to the aborigines, also four rugs.
- Feb. 24 : The natives supplied us with large quantities of fish.
- Mar. 28 : About fourteen fresh aborigines came to camp. We have now about 100 -- men, women, and children camped outside the stockade.
- May 3 : Natives at work getting bark, and clearing stones away on the beach where the *Julia* is moored; they got damaged flour in return for their services. The damaged rockets were fired in the evening for their amusement.
- Jun. 4 : Natives getting bark, and assisting the men to put up huts.
- Jun. 17 : The natives brought in about 240 lbs. of salmon.

(SAPP 80/1866:7-11)

Manton obviously let commonsense prevail and he was realistic about his responsibilities as well as humane towards the Aboriginal people. He knew that they would take anything left lying about, but he also admitted that this placed the onus upon the expedition members to look after their property. Manton also recognised the dangers of totally free interaction between the two groups, but he acknowledged the advantages of friendly interaction, provided that some reasonable limits were observed by both sides.

The natives behaved exceedingly well after I left the camp, and Mr. Packard reported that at the time of the fearful hurricane which they had there, the natives who were about the camp at the time appeared to be very much concerned about the safety of our goods, as all the tents were blown down, and a great many things carried a hundred yards across the plains by the violence of the wind, and the natives assisted our men in collecting them together again, and I am told that they did not attempt to steal anything at the time. However, too much confidence must not be placed in their honesty for steal they will if they can only get the opportunity. I therefore think it advisable to keep them entirely outside our camp, and at the same time to keep all our things inside and under cover as much as possible so as not to excite their curiosity or their propensity to purloin.

When the Survey Camp was removed, the natives also came to the neighbourhood of Escape Cliffs, but did not come to camp until the 25th of December; after this the men continued to visit our camp almost every day until the 8th February, when they brought their women and children and pitched their camp a short distance from ours ... The natives are pretty quiet up to the present time and have kept us well supplied with good wholesome fish, such as turtle, and other kinds almost equal to English salmon or turbot, which they exchange with us for condemned flour. We have seldom been a day for the past three months without one good meal for everybody in camp, which I have no doubt has been the means of keeping us all in such excellent health. (SAPP 80/1866:1,3)

Apart from the occasional threat being exchanged when some Aboriginal men were caught stealing, only one potentially dangerous incident is reported to have occurred. Young recorded in his journal entries for 28 May to 31 May that a large number of unfamiliar Aboriginal people had swelled the local group to about 150 people. It seems that some of these people were angered at not receiving any flour, as they had not understood, as the others so obviously had, that flour was something for which they should barter or work. Young was of the opinion that it was only fear of the cannon which prevented a fight, and he may have been right as Miry, the man the expedition members considered to be the Aboriginal chief, specifically asked that the cannon be fired and some rockets be sent up. Miry's diplomacy seems to have paid off. The misunderstanding appears to have been sorted out by Miry and the Aboriginal people themselves, and Young's journal indicates that relationships returned to normal.⁸⁸

It was not Manton's fault that the ill-chosen site at Escape Cliffs doomed the expedition to failure. Following protracted parliamentary debate (see Donovan 1981:62-63), it was finally decided to recall Manton and abandon Escape Cliffs in October, 1866 (SAPD HA 1866:693).

What sort of verbal communication had there been between the expedition members and the local Aboriginal people? Under Finniss, there had obviously been very little although as already noted, there may have been more unofficial contact between the two groups than Finniss reported or even recognised. Despite clear instructions to seek and maintain friendly relationships with the local

inhabitants (SAPP 36/1864:3), there appears to have been no real attempt on Finni's part to do so, with the predictable result that relationships between the two groups were strained from the outset. No records or hints of verbal communication survive. Violence communicated all that Finni ever intended to communicate.

In contrast to this, during the brief period under Manton, it is obvious that verbal communication did occur. Certainly, much of the communication need not have been verbal — as noted elsewhere, bartering can always be by 'dumb barter'. On the other hand, many of the circumstances mentioned by Manton and by Young demand the use of language. People of both groups seem to have learnt each other's names, Young, for example, recording Goodietchy and Miry. The sorts of things which Young records individuals doing together, such as hut-building or searching for a lost cow or fishing and shooting or sailing to the Vernon Islands, suggest the necessity for verbal communication. Specific requests too are recorded such as Miry's request for the cannon to be fired, as are indications of the communication of information on such matters as how many days someone would be away (SAPP 80/1866:10).

There was some learning of Woolna words by whites — notably by John Bennett who continued to collect words several years later when a member of Goyder's survey team in Darwin. A few of the words he collected were published in Parkhouse (1895b:15).

It is also quite evident that an English pidgin was developing and was in use between the two groups. Although no specific examples are yet known which were recorded at the time, Harriet Douglas (later to become Harriet Daly), who came with her father to Darwin a few years later in 1870, recorded the encounter between the ship on which she was travelling and some Woolna people in the vicinity of Escape Cliffs.

... there is nothing further of interest to relate until we neared the shores of the Escape Cliffs Settlement, which had been abandoned for the more promising one of Port Darwin. Here we were seen by some natives, who paddled off in canoes to meet us. Long before they came alongside, their gesticulations and signs showed us that their intention was to warn us of a danger they thought we were unaware of. This proved to be a reef near the Vernon Islands, on whose coral bosom several ships met their fate.

The blackfellows clung on to a rope we threw to them, and hauling their narrow bark canoes alongside, cleverly scrambled on deck. We at once entered into conversation with our savage visitors, though somewhat under difficulties, for our knowledge of their language was nil, and their acquaintance with ours extremely limited — such expressions as "my word", "very good", "tum tum", when they saw a supply of food being made ready for them to take ashore. "You gib me baccy", and "big one ship come on", were intermixed with a voluble flow of the Woolna dialect. However, their hands and gestures were far more intelligible than their tongues and our unclad visitors left us in a very amiable frame of mind, giving us in exchange for a supply of tea, sugar, tobacco, and flour some curious shells that were used to bale the water out of their canoes. (Daly 1887:41-42)

Like the Port Essington pidgin, the significance of this Escape Cliffs pidgin in the long-term view is that those who spoke it, both Aboriginal and white people, were involved in the beginnings of Darwin and in the development and expansion of an English-based pidgin which was to become a significant means of communication.

Conclusions

The four European settlements on the Northern Territory's north coast present interesting sociolinguistic contrasts.

At Fort Dundas on Melville Island, no kind of peaceful contact was ever made between the Aboriginal and white people, and no contact language even began to develop.

At Fort Wellington on Raffles Bay, the situation seemed destined to replicate Melville Island until the arrival of Barker. The single-minded pursuit by the two leaders, Barker and Mariac, of rapport and peaceful co-existence created a situation in which verbal communication became possible. Barker's enthusiasm for learning and using a local language meant that the contact language which emerged during the last year of the garrison, was based both on English and a local vernacular. Given a continuation of the circumstances, it is interesting to speculate on the nature of the contact language which might finally have developed and stabilised. What did develop in the short time available seems to have had more of the nature of a series of interlanguage varieties than a pidgin.

At Victoria on Port Essington, any potential hostilities were averted by the heritage which Barker and Mariac had left behind of mutual trust and friendship. The contact now being between large groups on both sides rather than a few individuals, an English pidgin emerged rapidly, perhaps by relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin. By 1849, this pidgin had gained general acceptance. One of the more intriguing aspects of this pidgin was its survival twenty years later to influence the development of a more widespread pidgin in the top end of the Northern Territory after the settlement of Darwin in 1870.

Although, like both Fort Dundas and Fort Wellington, the first period of settlement at Escape Cliffs was characterised by aggression and violence, the latter period under Manton saw a changed attitude which was developing towards peaceful co-existence under the commonsense leadership of Manton and the diplomacy of the Aboriginal leader, Miry. Some whites took an interest in the Woolna language, but an English-based pidgin began to develop as the major contact language between the two groups. Both Europeans and Aboriginal people who spoke this contact pidgin were involved in the early days of the establishment of Darwin a few years later.

CHAPTER 6

PERMANENT EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF AN ENGLISH-BASED PIDGIN IN EARLY DARWIN AND THE MINING CAMPS

The Darwin survey camp, 1869

Port Darwin had been recommended as a suitable settlement site for some time. Manton reported in 1866 that 'Port Darwin ... is spoken of in the highest terms and is said to be scarcely inferior to Sydney Harbour'.⁸⁹ McKinlay (1866:21) was also among those who claimed that Port Darwin was an excellent port which would 'command the whole useful interior easily'. With the abandonment of Escape Cliffs, the South Australian government was in danger of breach of contract with respect to the Northern Territory land sales, the five-year period for the completion of government surveys being close to expiry. An embarrassed and anxious South Australian government passed an amendment to the Northern Territory Act in 1868 which gave land-holders an allowance of fifty per cent more land and extended the period for surveying it a further five years.⁹⁰ Determined not to fail this time, the government gave the task to the dynamic and experienced surveyor-general, George Goyder. He demanded and received his price, hand-picked his men and equipment, and sailed straight for Port Darwin (Powell 1982a:81). His team included a number of the more reliable members of the abortive Escape Cliffs expedition.

Goyder and his men laid out the site for Darwin⁹¹ and for a number of other potential nearby settlements, along the deep arms of the harbour: Southport, Daly and Elizabeth. Of these, only Southport was ever settled but, unlike Darwin which it once rivalled, Southport did not survive.

The Larakia⁹² people owned all of what is now formally Darwin, and in accordance with the principles discussed in Chapter 4, they belonged to a wider speech community containing a number of other nearby language groups. Goyder's surveys took in some of the lands of several of the Larakia's neighbours, including the Woolna already encountered at Escape Cliffs. Their traditional territory adjoined the Larakia territory at Shoal Bay just to the north-east of the present-day City of Darwin (Parkhouse 1895a:1).

The meeting of the Larakia and Woolna people in the vicinity of Darwin is the explanation for a strange event which, if true, is an account of some of the first English words used by Aboriginal people in Darwin. A persistent and somewhat remarkable anecdote among the older residents of Darwin is that the Woolna people learnt the campfire songs of Finniss's survey team and taught them to the Larakia, who in turn sang them to Goyder and his men when they set up camp at Port Darwin (J. Harris 1984a). With what is undoubtedly a large degree of poetic license, Hill (1951:93) narrates the incident this way.

Shyly smiling through the trees, the Larrakia came to give them a civic reception in sing-about. Expecting some weird atonic saga of the Stone Age, the white men gathered curiously round. They were dumbfounded when, there in the timeless firelight of world's end, the sylvan choral society broke into a lusty rendering of "John Brown's Body", the Glory, Hallelujah! full choir, setting the rocks ringing, and for encore, piccaninnies sweetly joining in, "The Old Virginia Shore". Word-perfect though they knew no English, time-perfect and tone-perfect with no conductor but a shrivelled old beldam beating her yam-stick on the ground, these naked stragglers of an unknown strand might have been a minstrel show in Dixie!

Lockwood (1968:35) also describes this event, although he does so with much less embellishment than Hill and he claims that the Larakia actually sang 'My Old Kentucky Home'. However, none of this will ever be able to be substantiated unless some of the manuscript and other archival material relating to early Darwin eventually reveals a detailed account of the incident. The only additional comment which the writer can contribute thus far is that there was no need for Hill to suggest (1951:93) that the Woolna people had eavesdropped from the mangroves. Young (SAPP 80/1866 [13 Feb.]) records that during Manton's time as leader, such songs were performed for the Woolna people after they had danced corroborees for the entertainment of the white settlers. Indeed, the very first contact between the Adelaide River settlers and the local Aboriginal people actually included the teaching of 'negro songs'!

As Captain Hutchison wished to open friendly communications with the natives, we immediately brought up and sent a boat in - several of the natives coming out on the mud, up to their knees, and making friendly signs, by holding up their arms over their heads with the hands extended ... some of the men getting up the drum and fife and playing lively airs, so delighted them that three plunged into the river and commenced striking out for us ... The additional attraction of a fiddle and two or three concertinas, soon brought off about a dozen or more, and at one time we had sixteen on board ... The natives behaved very well; and having great powers of imitation, were soon dancing jigs and polkas with the men, and joining in chorus to negro songs; indeed anything said to them in English, was repeated by them at once, without mistake. (SAPP 18/1865:2-3)

The story of the singing of these songs in Darwin by the Larakia people may be apocryphal but it is more likely to be based on events which actually happened but have since been exaggerated (J. Harris 1984a:4). It is indicative that harmonious relationships were established with the local people right from the survey team's arrival. Even before disembarking, Bennett chatted with Aboriginal boys who approached in a canoe, apparently using the Woolna language (Kerr 1971:68). Bartering seems to have commenced within a few days (Lockwood 1968:35). The two Larakia men, Umballa and Billiamook, to whom Hill refers, became prominent identities of early Darwin. Nicknamed 'Tom Powell' and 'Billy Muck', they were among those who were taken to Adelaide and back on ships during the next few years (Wilbey 1876:119).

The presence of the Woolna people in Darwin was sociolinguistically significant. It is clear that the fact that they could already communicate to some extent with English-speaking people facilitated early verbal contact. Some of the members of Goyder's survey team who had been in Escape Cliffs were already on familiar terms with some of the Woolna people. The old 'chief', Miry, turned up in Darwin shortly after the arrival of the survey team in a courageous demonstration of compassion. He had rescued two of the crew of a shipwrecked Malay trepanging vessel, protected them from death at the hands of those Aboriginal men who had already speared some of their comrades and delivered them to Goyder in Darwin. Margaret Goyder Kerr, Goyder's granddaughter, from a study of Goyder's papers, described Miry as 'a peacable old fellow with an obvious liking for whites, often to their embarrassment and inconvenience. He had many an altercation with his tribesmen when they felt moved to aggression.' (Kerr 1971:108). If it were not for Miry and other unsung Aboriginal leaders such as Nilunga and Miranda of the Larakia, Darwin would have been a much more violent and racially tense place. This peacemaker to whom John Packard owed his life was almost certainly Miry.

An instance occurred in which it was necessary ... to go three or four miles from camp ... Looking up hurriedly, I was surprised to find that I was completely surrounded by from 200 to 300 natives ... For the next 20 minutes to half an hour I stood, without moving, while the chief, in the middle, facing me, excitedly talked to his men and threw his forefinger and arm towards me. Although I understood some of the language of the natives at Port Darwin, this was a different tribe, and I did not understand a word that was said and I had not the slightest hope of coming through the ordeal without a severe struggle.

I was absolutely amazed when the chief made a sign and suddenly clapped his hands together, and they all disappeared in the grass. (Packard in Kerr 1971:115)

Miry's peacemaking in fact, put him at times in personal danger, particularly from those Aboriginal people not of his own group (see, for example, Kerr 1971:147). Like Mariac at Raffles Bay and others like him, a great deal is owed to Miry and little recognition has ever been given him.

The Larakia and the Woolna people always tend, in the literature, to be cast in the role of traditional enemies (Wildey 1876:115; Daly 1887:70; Donovan 1981:181). This view is, of course, anthropologically naive. They were traditional neighbours with all the relationships as well as all the tensions which this implies. They were part of the same speech community and they intermarried (Parkhouse 1895a:2). As is still the case in traditional Aboriginal communities today, the inevitable quarrels were most frequently solved through carefully controlled, ritualised aggression. Even the young Harriet Douglas observed that what appeared to her to be elaborate and large-scale preparations for battle did not result in bloodshed (Daly 1887:70). This is not to say that there never were acts of spontaneous or even pre-meditated violence between the Larakia and the Woolna. There undoubtedly were, but this is not so much indicative of traditional enmity as it is of the effects of white settlement. There are sound geographical reasons why the harbours and rivers so often chosen by Europeans as settlement sites were frequently also places where the traditional lands of several Aboriginal groups converged.

Thus the activities of the new intruders were of interest and concern to several groups. One almost inevitable consequence was that interest in Western goods, together with anxiety to have some control over or involvement in what was happening, tended to prompt Aboriginal groups to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence in the vicinity of European settlers. Darwin provides a good example. Although Port Darwin itself was just inside Larakia territory, the Woolna people eventually established a permanent campsite there (Parkhouse 1895a:2) and there were other groups as well, such as the Beriguruk who had traditional rights to visit Darwin and began to do so with increasing frequency. One of the many far-reaching effects of such moves was that Aboriginal groups who had, under normal circumstances, previously met only for ceremonies and under other carefully controlled circumstances, now were forced into close daily contact. This in itself placed considerable strain on the traditional mechanisms for reducing tension and avoiding conflict.

The seven months of Goyder's survey in 1869 were not without racial tension and violence between Aboriginal people and whites, but here Goyder showed considerable insight and acted with caution and with wisdom. When Bennett was murdered,⁹³ Goyder wisely refused to retaliate.

We were in what to them appeared unauthorised and unwarrantable occupation of their country ... Territorial rights are strictly observed by the natives ... even a chief of one tribe will neither hunt upon nor remove anything from the territory of another without first obtaining permission; it is scarcely to be wondered at if, when opportunity is allowed them, they should resent such acts by violence upon its perpetrators (Goyder, quoted in Kerr 1971:146).

As Powell (1982a:83) points out, Goyder was a 'man of his time'; that is, he believed that the mission of those who settled the north would be to civilise 'these miserable specimens of humanity' and that the destiny of the Aboriginal people was to earn their keep by working for the Europeans. Goyder, however, was not a vindictive man and both his restraint in the face of provocation and his willingness to try to see the Aborigines' viewpoint augured better for race relations than the oppressive and racist violence of people such as Finnis and Smyth. It also highlights once more the significance, in those early days of European settlement, of the attitudes of the person in charge. Goyder left Darwin for Adelaide in September 1869, his task completed. In a sense, he was the last of his kind and his departure marked the end of an era. He was the last 'commandant' and never again would European presence in the Northern Territory be so small and so disciplined that one leader could have so much control over the interaction between the European intruders and the indigenous people.

There were quite clearly, during the survey camp in 1869, some definite attempts by some Europeans to learn and use Aboriginal languages. Bennett, before his death, was continuing his study of the Woolna language and compiling a dictionary of Woolna words (Goyder in Kerr 1971:142) and a number of others such as Packard claimed some knowledge of Larakia. The sociolinguistic circumstances, however, were such that it was inevitable that an English pidgin developed. The Aboriginal people, for a start, spoke several distinct languages. The Woolna people, as has been noted, already utilised an

English-based pidgin and thus were able to provide a model. The Larakia people, too, mastered English words very rapidly indeed and the skill of some of the more prominent individuals such as Billiamook was often commented upon (Wildey 1876:115).

It is plain that by the end of the brief survey camp, a rapidly developing English-based pidgin made verbal communication possible between English-speakers and Aboriginal speakers of several distinct language groups. The writer has not yet located any recorded examples of connected pidgin of the survey camp year in 1869 although there are one or two isolated words in Goyder's diary.

Darwin and the goldfields

Darwin was formally founded in 1870 with the arrival of the new Government Resident, J.S. Milner and his staff of forty-four. They represented virtually the whole white population of the Northern Territory. If it had not been for the decision late in 1870 to construct the Overland Telegraph, Darwin may have remained insignificantly small for much longer.

The idea of telegraphic communication, however, between Australia and Britain gripped the minds of governments and commercial interests on both sides of the world. Undersea cable problems were solved in 1866 with the trans-Atlantic cable, and the British Australia Telegraph Company undertook to build and operate a cable from Java to Darwin. The South Australian government, in order to outflank a Queensland government bid, agreed with the company in October 1870 to construct the 3,000 kilometres of telegraph line from Port Augusta to Darwin by the end of 1872. Full of confidence, they had already commenced from both ends. The first pole had been planted in Darwin in September 1870. Thrust into a new age, Darwin became a busy frontier construction town and the jumping-off point for exploration, gold mining and agricultural development.

The Aboriginal people of the Darwin region made important and obvious contributions to the life style of early Darwin and there must have been a great deal of communication between them and the settlers. As is so often the case, however, no-one seems to have found the nature of those communications worth recording in any detail. There were no linguists like Earl or even any idealists like Barker and Wilson to take an intelligent interest in how people communicated with each other, with the result that we know more of the early attempts to communicate at Raffles Bay and at Port Essington than we do at Port Darwin.

Apart from various official reports, perhaps the earliest description of life in Darwin is that of Harriet Daly, daughter of Bloomfield Douglas who succeeded Milner as Government Resident in July 1870. As Harriet Douglas, she spent two periods in Darwin between 1870 and 1873 when she married Dan Daly and left the Territory. In her book *Digging, squatting and pioneering life in the Northern Territory of South Australia*, she recorded a 'well-bred' young lady's impressions of life in early Darwin which she described as 'a handful of log huts, with crowds of natives looking over our heads' (Daly 1887:46). Her descriptions of her relationships with the Aboriginal people as early as 1870 show the classic colonial situation for the development of a pidgin — that is, the Aboriginal women were daily employed as domestics under the direction of the European women, while there was much less contact with the Aboriginal men except for occasional bartering.

We speedily obtained their assistance in our laundry arrangements, for though I have not mentioned it, one of our greatest discomforts was the inability to get any clothes washed in camp — except at the price of twelve shillings per dozen. Annie, with all her energy, could not wash for such a large family unaided. Therefore N. and I, in addition to our knowledge of other household duties, added washing as our latest accomplishment. The lubras could not wash, in the proper sense of the word, but they rinsed clothes, emptied our washing-tubs, and brought us supplies of cold water; they also helped in the process of "hanging out" our weekly wash, and in many other ways. The women brought their babies sometimes with them on a washing-day ...

The men ... are a lazy race, and not at all alive to making the most of their opportunities. Had they been, they might have made money by supplying the wants of the community with fish, game or turtle. Now and then a "big one Leetpee" as they called turtle, was brought in, and at rare intervals one or two fish. Sometimes, when we were very short of potatoes, they dug up some yams and brought them into camp. (Daly 1887:68-70)

In that year, Darwin was still an insignificantly small outpost, seemingly clinging as tenuously to its existence as had its predecessors. As noted already, the Overland Telegraph was the catalyst which changed Darwin. It had been Harriet Douglas herself who symbolically planted the first telegraph pole in 1870, and when after over a year away, she returned to Darwin, it was not the same place. In the hinterland, the digging of holes for the telegraph poles had unearthed gold, and that just at the time when dreams were fading on many of the southern goldfields.

However, the voyage was soon over, and we were steaming into Port Darwin once more. We passed each familiar landmark; indeed, I knew the harbour so thoroughly by heart that every tree seemed an old friend to me. Boats raced out to meet us; and directly we anchored, N. and her husband hurried on board to welcome us back. I found the children much grown in my absence — I had been away nearly fifteen months; and there were many improvements. The Overland Telegraph and the Cable Company had built a block of handsome stone dwellings on the esplanade overlooking the harbour, very near the Government Residence. The "Sleepy Hollow" of auld lang syne had become a large mining town; bark huts and log shanties were dotted about all over Palmerston, and instead of one vessel in harbour as of yore, a fresh arrival was of daily occurrence. Parties of diggers were leaving incessantly for the goldfields, which were 110 miles from Port Darwin. Boats went to Southport, taking up swags and mining implements so as to save the long transit by land. Of course, the one and only topic of conversation was gold-mining. Each day brought news of a fresh discovery ...

Every week fresh arrivals took place, and fully-equipped prospecting parties sent up by the newly-formed companies from Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney by degrees reached the scene of operations; indeed, for a time it seemed as if the early days of the Victorian goldfields were on the point of being lived over again.

Of course, all this influx of trade and population made great changes in the settlement. Shops were opened, in which, like the general stores so common all over Australia, one could purchase anything, from a bag of flour to a roll of silk. As soon as the principal store was opened, I was asked amongst others to go and inspect the stock. I was amazed at the sight of such a medley of things. The newest shapes in straw hats were lying side by side with camp ovens and frying-pans, while flannel and Oxford shirts, together with wideawake felt hats, vests, collars, and ties, kept company with boxes of tea, bags of flour, and ready-tapped barrels of whiskey, rum and gin. It was a thirsty time, I fear, and judging from the effects one saw, the liquor supplied could have been none of the best.

Drinking saloons were very soon opened — did ever a settlement start without one? — and their deadly consequences were soon apparent. (Daly 1887:145-149)

By 1873, the Larakia people had accepted the fact that Darwin was there to stay and had settled into a pattern of doing menial work for the reward of food, more often than not the food which the Europeans would, in any case, have discarded.

We had long since given up anticipating any troubles with natives. The Larrakias had become very much more useful, and had gained some idea of working in a systematic manner. They had also become more self-reliant, less afraid of invasion, and the old dread cry of "Woolna come on" seemed to have faded away. (Daly 1887:182)

A number of factors had combined to create this situation. One was simply the fact that an expanding Darwin now dominated their relatively small traditional lands. Not totally free to forage indiscriminately over the lands of their neighbours, the Larakia had no choice but to submit to an increasing European presence in and control over what used to be their own — a submission which was to have long-term effects which they could not yet have begun to perceive. A second factor was the change in diet which is the almost universally observed occurrence when the European bearers of refined foods come into contact with hunters and gatherers. Sugar and flour become virtually addictive, and working for such foods presents a much more attractive proposition than the exploitation of traditional food sources. Hunting and gathering are all too often romanticised by Westerners far removed from the realities of such a harsh life, but hunting and gathering for survival is hard work.

The Darwin whites were in many ways close to being dependent upon the Larakia people. As Reynolds acknowledged in an official report in 1873, 'the native women supply the inhabitants with water ... and show a good deal of industry' (Reynolds 1873:8). Indeed, within a few years, many thought them indispensable (Sowden 1882:145). As Daly noted, the Woolna people were now less evident.

They were fast becoming outnumbered by whites and furthermore, these whites were spreading over the top end of the Northern Territory, so that Darwin was no longer the sole curiosity it once was. There was an increasing number of other white settlements including the port of Southport and the growing mining camps. In common with an ever-increasing number of Aboriginal groups, the Woolna were being forcibly presented with the choice of becoming either fringe-dwellers around white communities or adopting a guerilla life-style, conducting spasmodic raids for revenge or theft. By now there were police and, for those who committed crimes against the whites, British justice. Daly recorded one of the first incidences of what was to become commonplace — the use of chained Aboriginal prisoners as labourers. This prisoner was a Woolna man.

Scotchman was tried the following day, and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment with hard labour, and served his time close to our very doors, for he cut wood and carried water for the use of the Residency; and the clank of his chains were a familiar sound at all hours of the day. (Daly 1887:186)

Provided it was in accordance with traditional law, the Woolna people had always had the right to visit Darwin. According to Parkhouse (1895b:639), there were Woolna people, in appropriate relationships to Larakia people, in permanent residence in Darwin. By 1881, however, the majority of Woolna people visited Darwin only on what was more or less an annual basis. Perhaps they were exerting their traditional right to do so, but the only evident purpose of their visit was to offer to the white man the only service for which he was prepared to pay them in cash.

The morals of our young men have been sorely tried this week. It would scarcely surprise us to find that some had fallen from the pathway of virtue. On Monday the blacks from the Adelaide and Alligator Rivers, hungering for tobacco and money, arrived on the outskirts of the town. The following morning they were all anxious to vend their merchandise. And what do southern Christians who spend so much on missionary enterprise think of their wares when we tell them that women and children were freely offered, not for sale but for the purpose of prostitution in the city. The order of doing business was peculiar. They went about in lots of twenty or thirty of mixed sexes. No sooner did a European stay to look at their uncouth figures than the salesman of the party stepped forward, pointing to the assorted lots. The old women were offered at sixpence, while others ranged in value to one or two shillings, the latter figure being demanded for quite young children under ten years. Towards dusk their value had depreciated and choice specimens were submitted at a sacrifice. (*Northern Territory Times* 25 June, 1881)

Except perhaps for the negotiation of a price, such trading required little verbal communication.

To return to the Larakia, it is now obvious that a stable English pidgin must inevitably have been the only possible linguistic development. Few, if any of the gold-fevered Europeans, arriving in large numbers and intent on making a

quick fortune, would have learnt any of the Larakia language or any of the languages of the other Aboriginal groups upon whose lands they were about to trespass. Few would have had multilingual competence and language learning skills anything like those of the Aboriginal people.

By the time the miners and storekeepers and government officials arrived, there was already a rudimentary English pidgin in use — first devised on the Adelaide River by the Woolna and the members of the Escape Cliffs survey team and later transferred to Darwin, there merging with the pidgin developing between the Larakia and Goyder's party and finally becoming stabilised in early Darwin, largely it would seem, by the Aboriginal women and the Harriet Douglasses around the washing tubs.

One of the earliest attestations of this Aboriginal Pidgin English was an observation by Arthur Ashwin in June 1872. He was a stockman with Milner's team who drove sheep and horses from Port Augusta in South Australia between September 1870 and June 1872 (Ashwin, 1927). Two of the team were 'Charlie' and 'Fanny', South Australian Aboriginal people. Ashwin (1927:92) noted their fear of Aboriginal people in the North, even those to whom Ashwin referred as 'Port Darwin natives ... semi-civilized ones, which understand pigeon English'.

In the same year, one of the first gold-miners, H. May, noted in his diary, evidence that there was already a rudimentary English pidgin developing in the various mining camps outside Darwin.

(At Southport) we have not got our hut finished yet. We get the natives to cut us poles and slip the bark off the large trees to cover it with, which they do for a pannikin of flour and a little tobacco. They call food 'tom tom'.
(May 1872:5)

(At Howley) One of their number came up and asked for flour. I thought if I gave them some they would go away ... They were soon back again and wanted more for picaninny.
(May 1872:16)

Another early visitor to Darwin was the widely-travelled William Wildey, who spent some time there in 1873. His tolerant and light-hearted description of Aboriginal people in early Darwin contains some of the few recorded samples of connected speech in the English-based pidgin which was then in use. The insights Wildey provided are worth quoting in some detail.

At seven o'clock every morning about 100 natives, chiefly women, and children, leave their whirlies, a mile from Palmerston, and, cheerily chanting a distich or two, saunter into town. They visit the tents or huts of those who encourage them, and gladly perform any light work such as fetching water, sweeping the yard, picking over potatoes, and doing scullery work. They are rewarded with "Tom Tom" i.e. flour, sugar and refuse tea; although all the garbage thrown away, such as putrid meat, rancid bacon, and rotten potatoes, are luxuries by no means despised by them. But in Europe, do not thorough epicureans like high game? Some few speak English fairly, and like to show it off, and ask any passer by for a shilling. They seem to be very good-tempered, light-hearted and chatter away most volubly, all at once, and without intermission during the

time they are at work, and are said to be very honest, although up the country the men steal anything lying about; but at half-past four they begin to watch the sun, and gradually about five all decamp, and, after dark, hold high, though innocent revel over their decomposed gratuities. Very seldom do the young men work, they are supposed to be deterred by the old men, who approve of the young women not only performing the work for the township, but receiving the "Tom Tom" in payment, of which perhaps the old men obtain a greater share than they would from the youths. Men, women and children all wear the stick through the nose, and the men have their hair oftentimes in plaits bedaubed with an unguent of red clay ...

Many of the young girls just budding into womanhood are very pretty, are symmetrically formed, and walk majestically; their limbs never having been trammelled with fashionable habiliments, and in utter ignorance of the "Grecian Bend". They walk very erect, and with a fine "Roman fall" of the back.

Emma, the sable belle of Palmerston, who numbers fifteen summers, is much admired. She is always chattering in their musical language, laughing, and showing her fine white teeth ... In a most winning way she says, "Charley, me like you very much, give me banana". To another she observes, "Harry, me like you so much, give me 'Tom Tom'", and so on.

Miranda, is the king or chief of the Port Darwin natives, and is much respected by them. His subjects appear to be most happy and contented. They are temperate; in fact, with exception of those who visited Adelaide, they know not the taste of alcoholic liquor, and refuse to taste it. The women, who help the housewives, are rigidly correct in their behaviour. (Wilkey 1876:118-119)

As Wilkey recorded, by 1873 Billiamook and Umballa had been to Adelaide. In a few short years, the Larakia had been engulfed by the Western world and the English language, or a contact language based upon it, was there to stay.

In 1873, however, the white world was still new and exciting to the Larakia and they had no way of glimpsing what a few short years were going to do to them. Just nine years later, William Sowden visited Darwin. He was editor of the *South Australian Register* and accompanied an official South Australian parliamentary visit in 1882. Even if one makes considerable allowance for the blatant ethnocentricity of Sowden's writing, it is still obvious from his observations that life for the Larakia people had degenerated. It was far removed too from the novelty of cross-cultural interaction of the first few years of Darwin. Following is his description of the Larakia camp.

By this time we had got to the camp — a beautiful place not far from Fort Hill ... canopied by prolific tropical growth. But the beauty is all on the side of inanimate nature; and from the sea it is spoiled by the clusters of heterogeneous huts the blacks have built for themselves — huts compounded of bits of kerosine tin and drift wood, of bark and old bagging ... Erections mocking civilization ... But I spare

the reader disagreeable details respecting a people scarcely more intelligent, so far as the elders are concerned, than monkeys; nearly all naked; nearly all dirt-encrusted; nearly all syphilitic, more or less ... wizened old women and haggard old men, prattling but dull-eyed children, all squatting together with mangy curs; and young women, some ogling themselves in bits of broken looking-glass.
(Sowden 1882:145)

Despite his emphasis of the squalor and degradation, Sowden was still obliged to observe that the whites were very dependent upon the Larakia women for the carrying out of the more menial domestic chores.

The young lubras are engaged by the English as washerwomen and charwomen, and they work very well, I am told. Indeed, altogether they are almost indispensable to the whites.
(Sowden 1882:144)

As noted already, it was this daily interaction between Aboriginal and white women in the domestic scene which provided the main context for the stabilisation of the English-based pidgin. If one also takes prostitution into account, it is evident that even with respect to the white men, a significant proportion of their communication with Aboriginal people was with the Aboriginal women. Once Darwin was established and the Larakia people had become a fringe-dwelling minority, the Aboriginal men became of considerably diminished consequence to the white residents. Sowden's insulting anecdote about Miranda was written for his readers to laugh at, but it does provide one of the rare instances in that era of actual pidgin speech being recorded.

I had already paid a visit to their camp, whither they repair at night, for fear of "Mooldarby", when I met King Miranda, and accepted his invitation to look at it again. On the way down I thought I would test the truth of a charge of intelligence brought against him in a passage of a book of travel by an Englishman. This was our conversation -

"How many people are there under your rule?"

"Yah!"

"You understand English?"

"Yessee. Big fellow savee!"

"Well, then, how many people in your tribe?"

"My w-o-r-d! All about."

"My word" is an equivalent for our "good gracious" or something like it, "all about" signifies "plenty" amongst a dozen other things. I think, however, the reader will agree that the famed king of the Larrakeeyahs has cause for a big libel action against those who write him down as "highly intelligent". (Sowden 1882:144)

Although very few further examples of this Darwin pidgin as spoken between European residents of Darwin and the Larakia people have yet been located, there is no reason to presume that communication between European and Aboriginal people was in anything other than an English-based pidgin, a pidgin

which had roots in the contact languages of the survey camps at Escape Cliffs and at Port Darwin itself and which by 1882 had had twelve years of development and stabilisation. The sociolinguistic circumstances of its use were almost certainly limited and it would therefore have had a restricted lexicon, but it nevertheless fulfilled the communicative necessities for which it had developed.

The Port Essington people

From 1838 to 1914, the Aboriginal people of the Port Essington region (i.e. the Cobourg Peninsula), move in and out of the history of European settlement of the Northern Territory. Their association with the 'Macassans' has been discussed in detail already, as has their friendly acceptance of the British garrison at Raffles Bay after 1828 and the Port Essington garrison from 1838 to 1849, their contacts with explorers and their development of an English-based pidgin for communication between themselves and the members of the Port Essington garrison. Mention has also been made of the tragic and disruptive effect of the Port Essington garrison with respect to the general health and wellbeing of the local communities. It has also been noted already that there continued to be intermittent contact between Europeans and Port Essington after the abandonment of the settlement in 1849. As a consequence, the English-based pidgin survived.

These contacts were, of course, with Europeans who came by sea. Until the establishment of Darwin, the only Europeans to reach Port Essington by land were Leichhardt's party in 1845 (see Chapter 5). The next attempt was made in 1872 by two men named Borradaile and Permain,⁹⁴ who were supposed to have had exploration experience in Africa (Lewis 1922:129). They had not been heard of for five months when John Lewis arrived in the Northern Territory. He had acquired land at Port Essington in 1871 and had come overland from Adelaide to visit it (Lewis 1922:63). Government officials in the Northern Territory gave his little expedition semi-official status, added two policemen to it and sent Lewis to look for the missing men. The party reached Port Essington without having located any evidence of Borradaile and Permain and finally heard rumours from some Aboriginal people that they had been killed. All that now can be pieced together about them is set out in Spillett (1982). At Port Essington, Lewis found evidence of Europeans having camped nearby but he was not able to ascertain who they had been. Lewis and his party were picked up by the government schooner *Flying Cloud*, and taken back to Darwin (Lewis 1922:139).

On the way to Port Essington, Lewis's party encountered many Aboriginal groups, some of which were hostile until they were within six days' journey of Port Essington. Lewis then records in his diary for October 27 that they 'met a lot of friendly natives ... (who) ... spoke a few words in English' (Willey 1876: 133). The next day they met many more Aboriginal people, men, women and children, with whom they obviously communicated readily. They reached Port Essington on November 1. There they found themselves very welcome, meeting several of the well-known Port Essington identities including 'Bob White', whose time on the *Beatrice* as interpreter has already been mentioned; 'Jack Davis', a young lad at the time of the British garrison who had even been taken to Adelaide and to Hong Kong and who was now considered a leader of his people and 'Flash Poll', popular with the soldiers as a young woman, now aging (Kelsey 1975:31), but sprightly and fun-loving.

These natives trade with the Malays to a considerable extent, and many of them can speak both English and Malay. 'Flash Poll' can say the Lord's Prayer correctly. (Wilbey 1876:135)

She informed me that she had been a servant of Captain Lambrick and that she could repeat the Lord's Prayer. She looked about fifty years of age, and was very active and as straight as a die. She addressed me as 'Commandant' and told me that they were hungry for 'tobacca'. (Lewis 1922:137)

The general attitude of friendship of the Port Essington people towards Europeans plus their ability to communicate verbally was something which Lewis found remarkable.

Although the natives were friendly, they had no doubt been trained by the soldiers when it was a settlement, and they were different from any other tribe of natives I had ever met. What English they spoke, they spoke properly. There was no pidgin English among the old hands who had been there at the time of the military camp. If you sang out to one of them, he would immediately jump to his feet, and answer by saying, "Sir!" and would always raise his hand to his forehead when addressing you. I never saw more honest and trustworthy men. (Lewis 1922:151)

It is not clear what Lewis meant by 'what English they spoke, they spoke properly', but it is certain that Jack Davis and others had had concentrated exposure to the English-speaking world, even beyond Port Essington. It is highly likely, as noted in the previous chapter, that a few of these closest associates of the British may well have spoken a language variety which was better described as English than as pidgin English.

In the early 1870s,⁹⁵ Lewis established the Cobourg Cattle Company — actually a buffalo shooting concern — and lived at Port Essington where he built a small homestead (Lewis 1922:148). He was succeeded as manager a few years later by Robinson.

In the years which followed, considerable numbers of Port Essington Aboriginal people were taken to Darwin for various types of employment. When, for example, the plantation was begun across Darwin Harbour at Delissaville, for growing sugarcane and tropical fruits, Port Essington people were brought in to work on the estate (Sowden 1882:86; Harry 1882:310).

The long-standing traditional association between Port Essington and its people and the 'Macassan' trepangers was a factor which further involved them in the activities of the European settlers. Port Essington was the location on the coast closest to Darwin at which a significantly large number of trepangers gathered, and as well, it was strategically close to the sea-route followed by other praus voyaging further to the East. The South Australian government decided in 1880 to impose customs duty on the 'Macassan' trepang exports (Macknight 1976:105). Robinson was at the time actually living at Port Essington at the Cobourg Cattle Company. He had, as noted above, been a trepanger himself, and in terms of location and experience, he was ideally suited to be made a resident customs officer. Consequently, he and his successors were given official status. One result was that communication by sea between Darwin and Port Essington became much more frequent.

When the Customs Department was first set up in 1880, it was under the control of the superintendent of the Overland Telegraph. Before long, however, self-styled adventurer Alfred Searcy was appointed to the post (Sowden 1882: 124). In the discharge of his responsibility of collecting duty from the 'Macassan' trepangers, Searcy sailed regularly around the coast from Darwin to Borroloola. His books (Searcy 1905, 1909, 1912) are an important record of interaction between Aboriginal people, Europeans and Macassans at the end of the nineteenth century. His writings have already been discussed in Chapter 4 as evidence of the widespread use of the 'Macassan' pidgin. Searcy (1912) is a particularly significant source for this study as it contains an exceptionally large number of examples of English pidgin. Many of these examples are records of the speech of his two Port Essington assistants, Arranboom and Mangerippy, who were his constant companions not only on his various trips but also in Darwin. (All these examples are provided in full in Appendix A.)

These boys spoke good English, Macassar and, of course, their own language. That is a good indication of their intelligence. (Searcy 1909:36)

Again, it is not clear what Searcy meant by 'good English'. What is certain is that the many examples that he provides show it to have been an English pidgin. The following quotation, for example, is Arranboom's reply when asked whether or not he thought there were any more snakes in a 'Macassan' woodpile.

"No more, me think it" was Boom's reply. "That fella snake been piccaninny, him bin come alonga wood from over there. Blackfella alonga Port Essington say Macassar man have to catchem wood, no more good fella sit down along island." (Searcy 1912:47)

In 1897, when Harry Cooper, a buffalo hunter, was speared on Melville Island, his brother Joe fled to the nearby mainland with two Tiwi women. When Joe Cooper returned to Melville Island in 1900, he took Port Essington people with him (Powell 1982a:104). Baldwin Spencer visited Melville Island in 1911, noting that because of Cooper, 'white men can land on Melville Island' (Spencer 1928:658). Krastins' assessment, however, is probably the more accurate: 'the real agents of change were Cooper's Iwaidja aboriginals' (Krastins 1972:43-44).

From the time of the British garrison at Raffles Bay, for almost a century, the peaceful acceptance of Europeans by the people of Port Essington and their involvement in assisting the Europeans in various ways was an important, if undramatic and rather unrecognised contribution to the European development of the Northern Territory.

Although Port Essington became a popular place to take official visitors, this close involvement with European activities finally led to considerable dispersing of the group. Furthermore, persistent contact with Europeans, and with Asians, continued to bring the fatal problem of diseases to which Aboriginal people had reduced immunity. The significance of this has been clearly shown by Peterson and Tonkinson (1979) in the recent Cobourg Peninsula land claim and in Powell's careful analysis of the little documentary evidence available (Powell 1982b).

Flash Poll lived to a ripe old age, dying at well over seventy around 1907. The last Aboriginal memories of the British garrison were those of Jack Davis, who was still alive in 1914 when Elsie Masson met him at Port Essington.

There is one living soul in the Northern Territory who remembers the days of the settlement at Port Essington — Jack Davis, a stooping, sightless old blackfellow, the last of his race. Nearly seventy years ago, Jack was an eager, agile, little black-boy, something of a pet with the regiment, who loved to run messages for the officers, to strut alongside a squad of marching men, and imitate their stiff movements at drill. Still he mumbles out the story of the regiment, beginning when "Siggem Bemmer" (Sir Gordon Bremer) first sailed into the harbour, and repeats the names of the officers, dwelling on the wonderful feasts at Christmas. Then his back straightens, a curious change comes into his voice, and he feebly attempts to shout the old words of command — "Shon! Eyes right!" So do the long-forgotten tones of some Cockney Sergeant-Major linger ghost-like for a few years more in the voice of an ancient North Australian aboriginal. (Masson 1915:126-127)

As Powell (1982b:98) summarises it, 'drastic change came to the society of the Cobourg Aborigines without need for the aid of massacre and dispossession by Europeans'. Their presence alone was sufficient.

The Chinese connection

The social conditions in which Aboriginal people of the top end of the Northern Territory found themselves in the last decades of last century are of prime importance to this study of the origins of English pidgins in the region. No discussion of Northern Territory society in that era can ignore the Chinese.

Within a few months of the foundation of Darwin in 1870, several Chinese had found their way there, probably from the eastern states by ship on which some were employed as cooks. Ah Kim, for example, was a cook on the *Gulnare* and may have left that ship as early as its fourth trip in 1870 (Kelsey 1975:44). The first shipload of Chinese labourers to the eastern states had been in 1848 (Choi 1975:16) and the number had risen to 2,666 in a few years (Willard 1966:121). After the advertising of gold discoveries through shipping companies in 1851, the number of Chinese in Australia increased dramatically to over 38,000 by 1861 (Choi 1975:22). This pattern was repeated on a smaller scale in the Northern Territory 26 years later.

The South Australian government accepted the view that neither agriculture nor mining could proceed in the Northern Territory without cheap Asian labour. The first boatload of indentured Chinese labourers were recruited from Singapore in 1874.⁹⁶ There were 186 Chinese people and a few 'Malays'.⁹⁷ Only 21 of the Chinese chose to return to Singapore at the end of their contract (Inglis 1967:22).

Once the influx of European miners was considered to constitute a gold rush and the legal right of Chinese to enter the Northern Territory as 'labourers' was understood, shipping companies began to advertise the goldrush in Asian ports. In 1877, the first Chinese arrived directly from Hong Kong to exploit the goldfields (Donovan 1981:172). Although some took labouring jobs, many did not and those that did more often than not soon left to seek their fortunes on their own.

With their first wages buying pannikin shovel and dish, they vanished into the scrub, leaving the settlers to lament. They showed a prophetic contempt of Territory colonization — "no more catchum gold, eat grass all same horsey". (Hill 1942:6)

Many of the European residents of Darwin disapproved of the influx of Chinese. The *Northern Territory Times* of 22 December, 1877 warned its readers that they would 'have to face the probability that in less than two months the Chinese will outnumber the whites here'. By the middle of 1878, this prediction had come true, there being a non-Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory of 850 Europeans and 980 Chinese (Donovan 1981:172). Ten years later there were well over 6,000 Chinese, outnumbering the Europeans by five to one. Indeed, it was the actual imbalance of Chinese over Europeans which was at least as significant as their absolute numbers at the precise time that the English pidgins were developing. The non-Aboriginal population trends are shown in the following abbreviated table:

Table 5: Non-Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory, 1871-1908. ⁹⁸			
YEAR	NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION		
	EUROPEAN ⁹⁹	CHINESE	TOTAL
1871	198	3	201
1877	536	174	710
1878	850	980	1,830
1881	728	2,723	3,451
1886	1,240	3,210	4,450
1888	1,411	6,122	7,533
1898	1,385	3,296	4,681
1908	1,344	1,629	2,973

This table shows only the total Northern Territory population. Most of the Europeans lived in Darwin and, although the number of Chinese even exceeded the Europeans in Darwin, outside of Darwin the Chinese far outnumbered them. As early as 1880, there were said to be 100 Europeans and 1,600 Chinese on the goldfields.¹⁰⁰

The first group of Chinese to arrive in Palmerston from Hong Kong in 1877 immediately set out for The Shackle.¹⁰¹ Soon they dominated the gold mining industry by sheer weight of numbers. In December 1879, Paul Foelsche noted that "the whole of Pine Creek country on both sides of the range is turned over by Chinese and a good deal of alluvial

gold has been taken out by them". Twenty months later, at the Margaret River rush, there were twelve hundred Chinese fossicking in an area "not more than half a mile long and half that wide". The Chinese were careful not to compete directly with Europeans, and initially they were concerned only with fossicking for alluvial gold on those fields which they had discovered themselves, or on those which were abandoned by Europeans, but they displaced the Europeans nonetheless, even in deep-lead mining. (Donovan 1981:173-174)

These Chinese immigrants nearly all came from Kwangtung (Guandong)¹⁰² Province, the southernmost province of China. In particular, most of them actually came from the region around Canton (Guangzhou) (Choi 1975:3), especially from Taishan and Chungshan (Zhongshan) (Inglis 1967:28). In Canton and at nearby Macao, Chinese Pidgin English had originated by the beginning of the eighteenth century (Hall 1944:95; Reinecke et al 1975:540; Hancock 1971:521) as a consequence of British trade which began in 1664 (Cheng 1982:126).¹⁰³ One of the results of the Opium War (1840-1842) was that China began to open up her ports to much more intensified foreign trade and residence. Known as the treaty ports, Canton was one of the first, the other early treaty ports being Shanghai, Foochow (Fuzhou), Amoy (Xiamen) and Ningpo (Ningbo) (S. Wang 1978:7). The use of Chinese Pidgin English as a trade language spread rapidly to these ports and many others as the number of treaty ports expanded to 50 by 1911. Indeed, the language has been referred to in the past as China Coast Pidgin. The great increase in foreign vessels and the loss of sovereignty by China after the war resulted in a relaxation of earlier emigration restrictions and a huge increase in Chinese emigration. Parker (1888), for example, estimated that by 1888 there were well over five million Chinese abroad. As a consequence, they took Chinese Pidgin English with them as their language of communication with non-Chinese. It is highly likely that the Chinese people and the British as well, preferred the Pidgin as it allowed only limited access to their jealously guarded cultures. As Yule and Burnell (1903:133) writing in 1886 noted, it was typical of pidgin English usage in colonial contexts that 'the masters used it in speaking to their servants as well as servants to their masters'.

The development of pidgin English (in Canton) reflected the Chinese 'Middle Kingdom' conception of the universe. The Chinese held the British, like all "foreign devils" in low esteem, and would not stoop to learning the foreign tongue in its full form. The British, on the other hand, regarded the "heathen Chinese" as beyond any possibility of learning, and so began to modify their own language for the natives' benefit. (Cheng 1982:126)

Outside China, however, the émigrés frequently found themselves grouped with other Chinese people whose languages they did not understand. As a consequence Chinese Pidgin English also became a lingua franca between Chinese people speaking different languages such as Cantonese, Hokkien and Mandarin (Ball 1911:135). As the longest-surviving and most widespread of the early English-based pidgins of the colonial era, Chinese Pidgin English, carried around Asia, the Pacific and even beyond by millions of emigrating Chinese, became a significant factor in the development of many other pidgins. It was the language which many English speakers thought was the only pidgin. Its best known survival was as the trade language of commerce and tourism in Asian

ports,¹⁰⁴ particularly Hong Kong, but even there it was a lingua franca of the Chinese. What most Europeans thought was Chinese Pidgin English was only their own very limited parody of it.

Pidgin is the language of Chinese. The only speakers of the dialect who handle it with fluency, with unhesitating command of its limited resources, and without corrective or hyper-corrective error, are the Chinese servants and shopkeepers, who will address Europeans in it, but who are able to deploy the full battery of its resources and make no allowances for difficulties of comprehension only with *other Chinese*. It is the language in which the amah from Canton communicates with the cook-boy from Shanghai, and in which the shopkeeper will address a fellow-trader from Fuchow (Whinnom 1971:104).

This important lingua franca was, of course, the subject of ridicule and even today is part of the '*flied lice*' type of ethnocentric caricature of Chinese people. Chinese Pidgin English even acquired its own spelling rules with 'ah' and double 'ee' for the long vowels, and l's instead of r's and so on.

Given the fact, already noted, that a high proportion of the Chinese immigrants in the Northern Territory came from the Canton region, it is possible that most of them may not have needed a lingua franca in order to converse with their fellow countrymen but not even this is certain. In Papua New Guinea, for example, Wu (1977:104) notes that speakers of See Yap Cantonese did not necessarily understand standard Cantonese. In the Northern Territory, immigrants from Taishan (in the See Yap district) may therefore have used Chinese Pidgin English to converse with some Cantonese speakers in much the same way as they used it to communicate with the smaller number of Chinese from other speech communities. Irrespective of this, they needed a contact language to communicate with non-Chinese.

It is unlikely that many of them were able to speak English although it is shown below that some who came to the Northern Territory as businessmen a few years later had reasonable command of English — evidence of the 'cline of proficiency' in English which typified the colonial situation (Kachru 1969:636; Cheng 1982:125). The obvious lingua franca was the Chinese Pidgin English of the port city of Canton. On the other hand, all the Chinese who came to Darwin may not necessarily have had full control of Chinese Pidgin English because many came from provincial towns around Canton (Inglis 1967:28). Choi (1975:3) describes the rural village as the major background of Chinese immigrants to Australia, a background which would not necessarily demand much contact with foreigners and therefore little need for a pidgin. Chinese Pidgin English, however, was widespread and had been in use in the Canton region for over 150 years when the Chinese emigrated from there to the Northern Territory. It seems likely that most people would have had at least a limited knowledge of it, while others who had perhaps been involved in commercial activities in Canton or worked for foreigners as servants would have been fluent. Furthermore, by the time Chinese were migrating to Australia, disagreements between the Chinese government and the British and French governments had resulted in the closure of Canton as a port of emigration (S. Wang 1978:136). Emigrants from the region around Canton then left through Hong Kong or Macao, often trans-shipping in Singapore (S. Wang 1978:119). In these ports and onboard ship, Chinese Pidgin English was the accepted lingua franca and the travelling Chinese had more intensified opportunities to learn and use it.

Except perhaps for comic effect or local colour, there was little interest in recording the speech used between Chinese and Europeans in the Northern Territory last century. Despite the dearth of examples, however, the small amount of information which can be culled from the literature is sociolinguistically revealing.

Firstly, it is evident that some Chinese were unable to communicate with Europeans at all. Kelsey described the following two incidents in the Yam Creek area in 1884. In the first, Kelsey and a police constable found two Chinese miners in hiding. In the second, they inadvertently caused a Chinese traveller's horses to bolt.

... (we) found two Chinese miners huddled below. Charles made them come out and we got them to the hut, where they seemed terrified, and their Chinese vocabulary was let loose with real strength. (Kelsey 1975:57)

We managed to head the horses back to the Chinaman, minus their load, which we offered to help gather and reload. However, he continued to shout strange words at us, and we left him to sort out his own troubles (p. 58).

Gordon Buchanen, in recording his experiences at Pine Creek in the 1890s, said that very few Chinese could speak English and that when spoken to in English, invariably responded 'no savee' (Buchanen 1934:151). Sowden recorded a similar anecdote in 1882.

We saw (a Chinese miner) squatting on his hams panning off his cradlings, and we asked him what luck he had. The response, with a shake of the head and also of the dish, was the 'no savee' which was as good an intimation of success as one could wish from a Chinaman. (Sowden 1882:53-54).

Hill (1951:130) expands this supposedly typical terse response to 'no savvy. Plenty dig.' It was, of course, a good inter-ethnic speech ploy for the Chinese, who had good reason to appear ignorant of English, but it is, on the other hand, also reasonable to assume that a proportion of the Chinese not only knew no English but had only limited command of the pidgin. On those few occasions, however, when the speech of Chinese is actually recorded, it is almost invariably Chinese Pidgin English. Some of the earliest examples are given in Sowden's (1882) description of the banquet provided by a group of Northern Territory Chinese at the Bridge Creek mining camp during the visit of J. Langdon Parsons, the South Australian Minister for the Northern Territory. The Chinese were seeking the right to buy land. Sowden's ethnocentricity unavoidably shows through his descriptions. He described Chinese Pidgin English as spoken by the Chinese as 'the guttural intonations of the Celestial throat' (1882:77), but when Parsons, whom he admitted could not understand Chinese Pidgin English, attempted to speak some, he described it as 'graceful pidgin' (1882:39). Nevertheless, Sowden was a journalist, and his efforts to present the banquet to his readers in vivid detail provide a degree of authenticity to his descriptions. After describing the meal and some of the informal conversation, Sowden (1882:75) recorded Parsons' speech, which was, of course, in English.

I am very much obliged to you, indeed, Ah Foo and gentlemen, for inviting us to dine with you this evening. I feel that it is an act of great courtesy on your part, and it has

afforded me and my friends the greatest pleasure to accept your hospitality ...

You are here for the time being in this land and under the law of this country. You are contributing towards the cost of its government, and in your several positions we wish you every prosperity. When we came to Bridge Creek the other day you were good enough to meet us with a very marked expression of your welcome. We never heard such a firing-off of crackers in our lives before ... we were glad to see it. We therefore beg to thank you for that act, which I accept as meaning that you are glad to see someone connected with the Government, and that you wish to keep the laws of the country in which you live.

An interesting and significant point then made by Sowden (1882:76) was that the spokesman for the Chinese, Ah Foo, did not comprehend the speech in English.

Then he (Ah Foo) turned to me and asked "I spose him talkee welly good jush now? What him mean? You savee him?"

Well, this was not encouraging. I told him that the burden of the address was - "You welly good fellow; me likum you".

Ah Foo then responded to Parsons' speech and put his request to him in Chinese Pidgin English.

My countleeman likee fahm nish countlee allee same Englishman; takee up lan', glow lice, savee fahm, hey? Nish one new countlee. Chinees notting do. Must findum somethin' do. Him wantum Gov'nment givve land glow lice allee same Englishman. How muchee money, Missee Palsons, sir, you chahgee Chinees piecee lan?" (Sowden 1882:76)

The next significant observation was that Parsons did not understand Chinese Pidgin English speech and had to have it translated into English, not by Sowden, despite his claims about his skill in the language, but by their Chinese servant.

The Minister reserved his defence, as he hadn't - not being accustomed to pigeon English - the slightest idea what Ah Foo meant, or what the allegation was. Then Ah Sam, our Chinese boy, was called to interpret. He explained the first oration which amounted to - "If a Chinaman wants to take up land for plantations can he do so ... and if he does 'do so' what will we have to pay per acre?" (Sowden 1882:76)

When Parsons explained that there was a provision for the purchase of land at 7s.6d. per acre, the Chinese were very pleased.

Ah Foo, chuckling said to me - "Allee yight. Me tlink ten tousan' Chinees longa Tellitoly two t'lee year ... We make nish place allee same Singapo'" (Sowden 1882:76)

Sometime later, the Parliamentary Party met Yee Kee, a visiting Chinese businessman and labour entrepreneur. What Yee Kee said about the possibility

of Chinese settlement in the Northern Territory was in English — not perfect English, containing obvious interference from the pidgin, but comprehensible English, nevertheless

You see ... this country close by China. It got grand land for garden and plantation; and I going home next month to speak of it to rich men in Hongkong and start Company to grow rice and sugar and Chinese fruits ... We will send out thousands of Chinese workmen to make your railway for you, and then China do big trade with this place. By and by gardens and plantations ready, grow things employ lot men when cannot work gold-fields — no water. Suppose railway made right to Adelaide, get all through country. Welly good. (Sowden 1882:128)

Some Chinese people had had this idea for some time. As Mining Warden Knight's Chinese cook had said "This place welly good, by and by all China come, Emperor too".¹⁰⁵ Parson's visit was an opportune moment to engage official sanction. The idea of a second Singapore, however, never came to fruition. In 1888, the South Australian Government, in response to a growing anti-Asian feeling in Australia, levied a poll tax on Chinese entering the Northern Territory and within a few years the movement towards a White Australia Policy ended the dream (Powell 1982a:116).

Sowden's observations show that Chinese Pidgin English was the lingua franca between Chinese and Europeans, and they also demonstrate that the pidgin had to be learnt. It could not just be improvised as its rules were already set, and it had been expanded somewhat over the years to the point where ideas more complex than simple trading transactions could be expressed. Parsons could not understand it, nor did the Chinese understand his English. Most Chinese probably did not understand English, but two exceptions were noted — a well-to-do Chinese businessman and a Chinese servant. Both, under quite different circumstances, had the need to use English and the opportunity to acquire it but they were the exception rather than the rule in the 1870s and 1880s.

There are some other examples of Chinese Pidgin English scattered throughout the literature. Sowden's examples are the most substantial and are probably the earliest recorded in the sense that they were published in 1882, probably from Sowden's journalistic notes made at the time. There are references to and examples of the use of Chinese Pidgin English earlier than 1882, but they were recorded many years afterwards and represent, therefore, memories rather than records, but in the absence of comprehensive data, these references are valuable.

The earliest of these is in Lewis (1922:145) who describes an incident in 1874 in which his Chinese cook used the phrases "welly well" and "by'm-bye". Searcy, to whose valuable records of Aboriginal Pidgin English reference has already been made, also gives some examples of Chinese Pidgin English. The conversations would have taken place in the early 1880s (see Searcy, 1912:33, 34, 36, 37, 52). The longest recorded speech in Searcy is that of a Chinese man nicknamed 'Wharfy' whom Searcy, as customs officer, suspected of evading customs duty.

"You makee write chit along steamer. Wharfy go look see one piece blanket all same from flend. He, He, He. Wha for Custom House man say one piece old wharfy man lascal? No more lascal, welly good man." (Searcy 1912:37)

Chinese merchants became (and indeed still are) shopkeepers and important members of the Northern Territory business community, and most of the later examples of Chinese Pidgin English are in reference to trading. Chinese Pidgin English was obviously still in use in 1913 when Elsie Masson (1915:48) was buying linen articles from Chin Sing for 'slippence piecee'. Birtles (1909) recorded this conversation with Wun Lung — 'Baker, Photographer, Fishing-boat Owner'.

"You wantem plicter taken? Me takem all plicter! Welly good, eh?"

"How much do you charge," I asked.

"One pong one dossen. Welly cheap, eh?"

"All right, by-and bye, maybe."

"All li. You wantem blead, you wantem fish, you wantem plicter, all li, you come see me, all li, Goo-bye."

Scant though this evidence may be, it is still quite sufficient to point to the widespread use of Chinese Pidgin English as a contact language between Chinese and Europeans. On the other hand, the nature of communication between Chinese and Aboriginal people is virtually unrecorded, which does not make easy the task of demonstrating the extent of any connection between Chinese Pidgin English and the development of Aboriginal Pidgin English. What can be demonstrated is that there must have been a significant amount of communication between members of the two groups.

The first and overriding argument is the sheer weight of numbers. It has already been shown that by 1878 the number of Chinese residents in the Northern Territory exceeded Europeans, that they far outnumbered them in the 1880s and still outnumbered them well into the 20th century. Even if there were absolutely no other evidence, it becomes illogical to imagine that there could have been no significant interaction with Aboriginal people. Furthermore, the evidence of Aboriginal interest in and response to European settlements can only indicate that for their customary behaviour to be consistent, they would have shown equal interest in seeing what benefit they could obtain from the Chinese and would thus have developed means of communication with them.

It is important to emphasise that by the time the Chinese influx commenced, there was already an English-based pidgin in use in Darwin between Aboriginal and European people and that the Chinese had played no part in its original development. Nevertheless, one cannot avoid the fact that within just four years of the beginnings of this pidgin, there was a significant Chinese population in Darwin and that they outnumbered the Europeans a few years later and continued to do so for many years.

No one bothered to record the daily interactions which must surely have been commonplace between the Aboriginal people and the Chinese. Only when European society was affronted was there any comment, the main source of indignation being the prostitution of Aboriginal women in Chinese brothels. Sowden (1882: 142) met in Darwin's Chinatown 'the only Chinese lady in South Australia'. The Chinese population was at that time therefore almost totally male, but the

European population was also predominantly male and it was not only the Chinese who frequented the brothels. They were for many years a regular item of complaint in the *Northern Territory Times*. In 1888 Inspector Paul Foelsche of the Northern Territory police reported seven Chinese brothels occupied by thirty four prostitutes. The Northern Territory Report for 1912 claimed that '... the wholesale prostitution of native women was a common and constant practice amongst the great body of Asiatics'.¹⁰⁶

Although prostitution provides evidence of interaction between Chinese and Aboriginal people, it should not be seen as the only kind of interaction just because it was the only kind reported. It is inconsistent with the nature of the developing multi-ethnic fringe to European Darwin that communication should be thus restricted.

A visitor ... strolling along the beach ... may, in the space of a few moments ... walk into a party of blacks crooning soft corroboree songs to themselves; then he may suddenly come upon a small joss-house guarded by chipped stone dragons with its gaudy gilt fretwork, waxen images and pewter bowls ... (Masson 1915:51).

Elsie Masson's book, *An Untamed Territory*, describes her experiences early this century in Darwin. Her book clearly reveals that her most lasting impressions were of the all-pervading ethnic mix which Darwin presented to her.

On the outskirts of Chinatown is a blight of small hovels jumbled together where live the rest of the coloured population of Darwin. Even in her first rapid drive the newcomer sees people of every colour, until she feels as if she were turning the leaves of a book of patterns ranging from deepest chocolate to pale cream. Black Aborigines throw spears on open grassed spaces between the houses; dusky Malays, short and sturdy, sit smoking by the roadway; children of all shades of brown peer with bright curious eyes round the tin walls of their homes; yellow, wrinkled Chinese, in blue silk trousers, carrying baskets slung on poles, pass at a shuffling trot.
(Masson 1915:31-32)

This is the classic situation for the development of a pidgin or for the utilisation and modification of existing pidgins. In the 1870s and 1880s, there were speakers of two English-based pidgins living in close proximity to each other in Darwin - the speakers of Chinese Pidgin English and the speakers of the Aboriginal Pidgin English of early Darwin. As has been emphasised already, it is not possible to reconstruct the interactions between the speakers of these languages. It is possible, however to demonstrate the presence in later Aboriginal Pidgin English of some of those forms said to be the markers of Chinese Pidgin English. This will be detailed in a later chapter.

One context of interaction between Chinese and Aboriginal people which would have demanded verbal contact was the widespread employment of members of both groups as domestic workers of various kinds. The important role of Aboriginal people in the employ of Europeans as key figures in the development of Aboriginal Pidgin English has already been argued.

It has also already been noted that Port Essington Aboriginal people were employed in the early days of Darwin on the plantation across the harbour at Delissaville. Chinese people were also employed on the plantation, and both they and the Aboriginal people were housed there, comprising the majority of the plantation residents.

The fifteen Chinamen working on the estate at one pound a week have their own galvanized iron quarters and the blacks — the Port Essington tribes — who do the weeding and such like have theirs on the opposite side of the creek. (Sowden 1882:86)

It is evident that Chinese and Aboriginal people were employed together in many different tasks. To quote just one, Holtze used them to gather seeds for his famous botanical collection.

... with two of my garden coolies and five natives, I collected a large quantity of seed.
(SAA 790/1889:607)

In the towns, domestic employment was always the major context in which Aboriginal and Chinese people found themselves together. It cannot be without significance that from the arrival of the first boatload of Chinese in Darwin, European householders adopted a practice of employing a Chinese cook and Aboriginal servants. Lewis was among the first. When he left Darwin to set up the Cobourg Cattle Company in 1874 he took with him a Chinese cook and two 'blackboys', one from Darwin and one originally from Port Essington (Lewis 1922:140). This domestic employment of both Chinese and Aboriginal people was to characterise Darwin European life for many years.

Tommy was the native servant who with his 'lubra' and a Chinese cook ran our friend's house.
(Grew and Grew 1916:277-278)

The practice was not restricted to Darwin, becoming quite widespread throughout the whole of the Northern Territory, particularly in the cattle stations where the most famous was to be Cheon at Elsey Station, immortalised by Jeannie Gunn (1908) in *We of the Never Never* (Linklater 1980:59). According to Kelsey (1975:115), the telegraph station at Katherine in the 1890s housed 'the Post and Telegraph Master, Mr. W.J. Handerson and his wife (my mother), myself, wife and child, a Chinese cook, Chinese carpenter, and two black boys'. In such a situation, it is difficult to imagine that there would have been no interaction between the two pidgins. Chinese Pidgin English was in a complex sociolinguistic context here. It may still have been a lingua franca between the two Chinese men, although this can no longer be proven, but it was also in contact both with the superstrate or target language, English and another pidgin based upon English. The identical argument applies to the Aboriginal pidgin English. The situation demands some linguistic convergence.

In a small but not insignificant number of cases, there was a close personal association between individual Chinese and Aboriginal people. Population records always listed 'half-caste' children of Chinese/Aboriginal ancestry although the numbers were small compared to those of European/Aboriginal ancestry (Cross 1956:79). These Chinese/Aboriginal children were not generally a consequence of prostitution, but of free liaison. There are today in many parts of the Northern Territory important families of Chinese and Aboriginal ancestry. The recent Kenbi Land Claim (Larakia) listed claimants of mixed

Chinese and Aboriginal ancestry (Brandl, Haritos and Walsh 1979:37). Miriam Rose Ungunmerr of the Ngankikurungkurr group who live in the Daly River region, describes the encounter of her people with Chinese prospectors.

Everyone was happy at one stage, and then when these Chinese guys came in to sort of look for mineral and all that sort of thing, they accidentally came across these (Aboriginal) people, and they — out in the bush — and if they came across a group of people in the bush, and if that's the place where they were all going to mine or something, and look for thing, they try and ask, oh, they'd, you know, talk to them, get them to help them look for these things. And when they sort of stayed there longer and worked for them they'd give them food and all this sort of thing. Then as the people, the mining groups, moved around looking for minerals elsewhere, they sort of, the people that were working for these Chinese people, they'd Chinese, yeah, people, they'd sort of move with them, and go to different places. And that's how they sort of, because if when the people that first came to work for the Chinese, Chinamans, they, then the other people would come up and visit them, and sometimes they'd ask them to stay there longer. And they'd sort of work too and get food and all that sort of thing, and that's how ... and then every time they'd move to another camp they'd come close up the Daly River sort of thing. They there'd be other people, Chinese men, sort of had farms, and that, and they'd sort of — ah, other people would move in and work for those, and work on the farm ... Some of those old ladies that used to go, and live with these Chinese men, Chinese man, and after a while they'd have a child too, for them.

(Recorded by J. and P. Read 1980:180-181)

Again, it can only be repeated that under such circumstances, the English-based pidgin languages of both the Aboriginal people and of the Chinese must have undergone changes in response to the sociolinguistic complexity of their interrelationship. The linguistic evidence will be discussed in Chapter 10.

Darwin and the mining camps at the turn of the century

Long before the turn of the century, there was a well-developed Aboriginal Pidgin English both in Darwin and in the mining camps. One of the rare Darwin residents who demonstrated a real interest in the local people was T.A. Parkhouse, the railways accountant in the late 1880s and early 1890s (Parkhouse 1895a, 1895b). The few examples of Darwin pidgin English he records are interesting because he uses them to explain Larakia kinship concepts. This provides an example of the way in which the pidgin was already being extended to cope with less restricted types of communication.

'That one him mollinnyu (married man). Him have two-fellow lubra ... Him lubra have em bun-ngilla (girl). By-and-by girl big fellow, him naowa (husband) catch him ...
(Parkhouse 1895b:641)

Despite the fact that the major gold-mining centres were in the lands of Aboriginal groups other than the Larakia and Woolna people, who were instrumental in the development of the Darwin pidgin, there is no evidence to suggest that the pidgin which was used in the mining camps was markedly different from that which was in use in Darwin, no doubt because miners took it inland with them as an entity. Unfortunately, there was even less interest in recording the mining camp pidgins than there was in recording the Darwin pidgin. Kelsey, however, did note a few examples in his diaries. The longest of these was the description of an incident at Yam Creek. A few years before, Kelsey had given a gun as a gift to 'Charley' and 'George', his two 'black boys'. On his return in 1888, Kelsey (1975:76) inquired about the gun.

When I returned to the Shackle a few years later, I met the boys and asked about the gun. Charley told me, "'Im bin bustem up. I bin lendem long Timbuk, my brother. Timbuk wantem shoot kangaroo. 'Im takem my gun and long time no more come back. Some blackfella go lookout longa Timbuk and bin findem Timbuk dead. That one gun goodfella gun, but Timbuk bin loadem too much and 'im bin busted. Blackfella bin see 'im track where Timbuk bin folla old man kangaroo, when 'im sit down dead. More further kangaroo sit down. 'Im bin dead too." (Kelsey 1975:76)

The miners were a transitory lot. Those who found any real quantity of gold, whether European or Chinese, got out quickly. Many died of tropical ills. The others moved from place to place seeking their fortune in the various gold-bearing localities. Most of the European miners finally left the Northern Territory. They would generally have had neither the time nor the inclination to do anything but carry some pidgin English from Darwin to the gold fields and from mining camp to mining camp. Thus a pre-existing pidgin was presented to new groups of Aboriginal people as the model for a contact language.

It needs to be stressed, however, that the Chinese were much longer term residents of the mining camps than were the Europeans. They remained behind long after Europeans had given up and left. The tin mines at Bynoe Harbour were one example.

With the exception of a few Chinese this district has been abandoned by miners until the prices recover.
(Report of the Administrator 1921:13)

Again, the point must be made that although we have no records of how the Chinese and Aborigines communicated with each other, it is obvious that they did. Blakely (1938:265) described the West Arm mines in 1908.

At the mine were about fifty working Chinamen and a China town of some two hundred. About a hundred blacks were camped there and only nine whites ...

The mining camps had almost all disappeared by the time Elsie Masson was describing life in the Top End of the Northern Territory in 1913. Pine Creek was the only camp to become a town, with a very significant Chinese population. Throughout the region, however, the pidgin remained – the language of every kind of communication from Masson's kitchen to the Darwin law-courts.

(In Masson's backyard. Masson 1915:47)

"Missis, me go out bush to-morra."

"What, George?" exclaims a startled Missis.

"Go back longa my country to-morra," he repeats ...

"Four moon my come back longa Darwin, sit down long you, Missis."

(At the Police Courts. Masson 1915:165-166)

Ada not being sufficiently enlightened to kiss the book, the oath was administered to her by the Judge, who said, pointing to the prisoners, "Now, Ada, you savvy those blackfella there?"

"Yaas, me savvy."

"You see those white gentlemen there?" (motioning towards the Jury).

"Yaas, me see 'em."

"All right, Ada. Now, you tell those gentlemen all you savvy about these blackfella. And you talk straight fella."

"Yaas."

"And loud fella."

"Yaas."

It is interesting to note that neither of the Aboriginal people in these conversations was a Larakia or even a long-term Darwin resident. George was a recent visitor to Darwin from the Daly River region to the west (Masson 1915:44) and Ada was from Hodgson Downs, far to the south-east (Masson 1915:166). Such was the convergence of pidgins which developed in many places throughout the Top End of the Northern Territory that people from such widely separated places as Daly River and Hodgson Downs could still be understood in Darwin. It must not, however, be inferred from this that Darwin was the sole or major source of Northern Territory Aboriginal Pidgin English. Various pidgins arose outside Darwin independently, particularly in association with the cattle industry. This somewhat different historical milieu is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE PASTORAL FRONTIER AND THE RISE OF THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY PIDGIN

Introduction

In the Northern Territory there was a long period of extremely violent contact between Aboriginal and European people. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, there was certainly violence at the early settlements, particularly at Fort Dundas and Escape Cliffs and in the first year at Raffles Bay. Most of the aggression was on the part of the Europeans. All these settlements were short-lived. Violence appears to have been relatively rare at Port Essington and in Darwin itself, although in Darwin's hinterland at the mining camps, acts of aggression were much more frequent. The mining camps were also short-lived, not that this in any way diminishes the tragedy of the inter-racial violence which occurred there. It was in the pastoral areas, however, that there was the most prolonged and intense period of violence, where what amounted to a campaign of extermination was waged by the European invaders against the Aboriginal inhabitants.

In this one-sided battle, a small number of Europeans was killed and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Aboriginal people were massacred, sometimes in revenge, sometimes for much less reason. The battle was mostly fought in the 1880s and 1890s and although Aboriginal resistance had been mercilessly crushed almost completely by 1900, the massacre of Aboriginal people continued well into the twentieth century.

This decimation and subjugation of Aboriginal people in the pastoral areas had tragic and far-reaching consequences for all aspects of Aboriginal culture and society in the region, including significant linguistic effects. Not only did the years of resistance and massacre become the milieu in which the English-based pidgin began to develop, they also became, finally, one of the key reasons why that pidgin should have been the major lexical source of the creole which replaced the traditional Aboriginal languages of much of the region of which the frontier was a part.

As a direct consequence of this, the whole issue of frontier violence and the near-extirpation of some Aboriginal groups is a crucial one in this study. Furthermore, it is my experience that even today in the Northern Territory, generalisations such as those I have just made are often resisted and that it is necessary to prove beyond doubt that these contentions are supportable, being based upon demonstrable historical facts. For this reason, this chapter will attempt to describe this tragic era from available historical sources. It is

tempting to avoid the details of such an unpleasant subject and simply to discuss the linguistic consequences. This, however, would render some important sociolinguistic claims liable to be dismissed as speculative. In order that the sociolinguistic consequences of the decimation of the speech communities of the Roper River region may be objectively discussed, what actually occurred will be set down in this chapter clearly and in sufficient detail. The linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences will be explicated and discussed later.

The moving frontier

As the European pastoral expansion extended slowly but inexorably from the earlier-settled south-eastern states towards the north and west, this region of confrontation between settlers and Aboriginal owners has come to be called the pastoral frontier. Beginning in approximately 1870, this pastoral frontier, both in the temporal and in the spatial sense, began to extend from Queensland into the Northern Territory, along the valleys of the Roper and Victoria river systems and into the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Within that broad band of pastoral frontier activity, it is the eastern section which is of most interest in this study. This area will be referred to as the Roper River region, and this chapter will, where possible, deal with that part of the frontier, although not exclusively, evidence from other parts of the frontier being used where it sheds light on events in the frontier as a whole or upon attitudes prevalent within it.

Before the coming of the Europeans, most Aboriginal people of the region which was to become the pastoral frontier, particularly the more inland areas, had had little contact with outsiders. On the other hand, the coastal people near the mouths of the Macarthur, Roper and Rose Rivers had had prolonged contact with the 'Macassans'. These people included the ancestors of many of those who now speak Kriol and identify with Ngukurr (Roper River) today.¹⁰⁷ A region near the mouth of the Roper River still retains the name Mangkatjarra (see discussion of this term pp. 102-103).

Until 1870, the only contacts which the people of the Roper River region had with Europeans took place during the fleeting and discontinuous visits by explorers. These contacts have already been discussed in Chapter 5. The construction of the Overland Telegraph was to change all that, not so much because of its own existence, but because it marked a track for others to follow — others who would bring tragic and sweeping changes to the Aboriginal communities of the region.

The Overland Telegraph

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Overland Telegraph and the gold that its construction unearthed changed Darwin from a remote outpost of European settlement to a busy frontier service town. The changes in the culture and society of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Roper River region which began with the Overland Telegraph were infinitely more drastic and irrevocable. The Overland Telegraph heralded the end of the era in which the Aboriginal

people of the region lived autonomously on their own lands and the beginning of the era in which life, for those who were allowed to live, was to become progressively more dominated by Europeans.

It must be realised that most of the Northern Territory was at this stage (1870) largely an unknown land to the Europeans. The only information they knew was in the journals of the few explorers, the only northward routes they knew were the maps of the explorers' paths. The Roper River, they thought, was a major barrier. The only known shallow crossing was at Leichhardt's Bar (now known as Roper Bar) where Leichhardt himself had crossed, although a point was discovered further to the west for the Overland Telegraph to cross the Roper. The Telegraph construction was to end forever the independence of the various groups which lived in the Roper River region. It ushered in an era which was to alter drastically their lives, disrupt their society, decimate their numbers and institute sweeping linguistic changes throughout the whole speech community.

Early in 1870, Bloomfield Douglas, Government Resident in Darwin and father of Harriet Douglas whose observations on life in early Darwin were discussed in Chapter 5, sent Senior Surveyor George MacLachlan to examine a route from Darwin to the Roper River — a region hitherto not traversed by any European explorer. MacLachlan reached the Roper in July 1870 (Threadgill 1922:117). He recorded that the Aboriginal people with whom he came in contact were 'very friendly; they were fine looking fellows, and some of the best featured I ever saw' (AA/A 1640:71/73).

Charles Todd, Postmaster-General of South Australia, had overall control of the Overland Telegraph construction. Perhaps unaware of MacLachlan having already been sent there, Todd sent John Ross northwards to the Roper River late in 1870. Ross reached there in May 1871 (Giles 1926:83). Although the South Australian Government at first rejected the idea of establishing a supply depot for the construction of the Overland Telegraph's northern sectors on the Roper River, the heavy rains of 1870-1871 demonstrated the impossibility of using bullock-drawn wagons in the wet season. Most teams were bogged and many were lost. Some spent weeks marooned on hill-top islands, unable to move. The logic of establishing a depot on the Roper River soon became obvious to the authorities. In October 1871, the *Gulnare* was sent from Darwin with supplies and timber for the construction of a store with instructions to offload them at Leichhardt's Bar (SAA 791/1872:9).

The initial boat-landing was, however, constructed three kilometres east of Leichhardt's Bar opposite the junction with the Wilton River and shortly thereafter shifted further east again towards the Hodgson River. At this spot there developed a sizeable township — what Alfred Giles (1926:162), who was there, described as '... an immense encampment ... flies and tents, waggons, drays, carts and buggies as well as horses and bullocks and some 300 men ...'. The temporary township was serviced by three ships, the *Omeo*, the *Young Australian* and the *Larrikeh*. The Roper Landing was, for a brief period, the largest centre of European population in the Northern Territory.¹⁰³

It seems that only minimal verbal communication between the European and Aboriginal people in the Roper region was attempted during the construction of the Overland Telegraph. The scant information which remains seems to indicate that the Aboriginal people were, in the first instance, friendly. Giles (1926:83) recorded that when John Ross's party first encountered Roper River people in May 1871, one of them came up and spoke to them. With the setting up of the

depot, the main emotion evinced by the local people was curiosity. Some came on board the *Omeo* on her first trip up the Roper and were shown various European artifacts, but were frightened off when rockets were fired (Sweet, 1907). Their delight and amazement at the paddle steamer *Young Australian* have been recorded. When they surprised a group of women passengers from the *Omeo* washing in the river, the European ladies promptly fainted (Taylor 1980: 128-130). They were 'rescued' by a gallant ship's officer brandishing his pistol, although it is highly unlikely that the Aboriginal people knew what it was he was waving.

The Aboriginal people instantly recognised a source of new commodities and of scarce materials such as metal (Giles 1926:92), which had hitherto been obtained only by trade with the 'Macassans'.

The Aborigines quickly appreciated the usefulness of iron, leather, bouilli tins and other items of European material culture, salvaging what they could from abandoned camps and occasionally also stealing into occupied camps while the telegraph workers were absent. R.C. Patterson came upon two Aborigines extracting ironwork from a pair of shafts that a work party had left behind. Tools left on the line overnight were promptly stolen. Bullock drays bogged and abandoned at Red Lily Lagoon were cut up and carried away. Aborigines cut the buckles out of harness left by H. Packard close to Bitter Springs (near the present Mataranka) and cut up the leather. (Merlan 1978:77)

Predictably, relationships between the Europeans and the Aboriginal people were harmed by European over-reaction to petty pilfering — an over-reaction which had been repeated many times before. The description of an incident in the diary of the party leader, R.C. Patterson¹⁰⁹ is reminiscent of what was an almost identical set of circumstances at Raffles Bay under Smyth (see page 124). In this event, it was presumed that some missing clothing had been stolen.

Davis accordingly got together a party of five men to go across the river and see if they could recover the stolen property — The blacks were plainly visible on the other side of the river, they had their lubras and children with them and were evidently laughing the camp to scorn — as soon as our boat touched the other side the chief beckoned to his tribe to make tracks ... he then put down his spear and boldly advanced up to Davis with a smiling countenance. Davis and his party then immediately surrounded him and got him down, after a tremendous struggle secured him, lashing his arms firmly together behind his back — they then brought him down to the boat and across — He was then taken to the blacksmith shop and a bullock chain firmly rivetted around his neck — he obviously thought that his last hour was come, he submitted quietly enough and bore himself with great stoicism. He was then chained to a tree that the natives on the other side could see him. (Patterson 29 May 1872)

This was an example of what Merlan calls 'the Aborigines' and Europeans' mutual lack of understanding of behaviour and motives' (Merlan 1978:76). The Europeans were intruders, and they neither appreciated nor cared about the real implications of their status. The Aboriginal perception of property and ownership differed markedly from that of the Europeans, as also did the conventional signs of possession and of abandonment. In any case, even if some Aboriginal people did steal the clothes (which is quite likely) and even if they perceived their action as theft (which is also quite likely), it is by no means certain that the visible Aboriginal families across the river were the culprits or even knew anything about it. The elder whom Davis and his party captured had obviously approached them making clear signs of peace — sending the large group away, putting down his weapons, advancing and smiling. The Europeans could hardly have mistaken his actions, but still they chose to capture him violently, secure and publicly chain him, intent as they were on righting the petty injustice of the missing clothing while ignoring the gross injustice of their very presence.

Despite all this, the Europeans continued with their ridiculous and futile charade. Two other Aboriginal men actually entered the camp. It can only be presumed that they were intending to negotiate the release of their fellow-countryman. They too were seized by the Europeans, although one managed to escape.

It transpired that our second captive was the son of the old chief — the native Prince of Wales in fact — they could not make themselves intelligible to us nor we to them. The young fellow kept bawling out to the lubras on the other side and at last the lubras jumped into the water to swim across — It then became evident that our captives wanted to propitiate the camp by sending for their women, but before they could land on this side we drove them back. (Patterson 29 May 1872)

The men were kept chained until the next day by which time Patterson had at least had the commonsense to realise that nothing was being achieved by continuing the fiasco. The two men were given a meal and some additional food for their families and then released. Patterson also had the honesty to record in his diary that 'it was by no means certain that the natives understood the cause of their captivity' (30 May 1872).

The relationship between the Europeans and the local residents was, generally speaking, characterised by mistrust and fear. As Morphy and Morphy (1981:7) note, despite the fact that no one was killed by Aboriginal people in the construction of the Overland Telegraph (Linklater and Tapp 1968:107), fear of the Aboriginal people clearly played a part in the moulding of European attitudes. Merlan (1978:77-78), who examined many diaries and journals relating to the Overland Telegraph construction period, found that almost every diarist recorded the distant killing of John Milner by Aboriginal people over a thousand kilometres away in Central Australia. Patterson and other diarists frequently recorded the use of firearms to drive Aboriginal people off. Merlan's studies also disclosed that many journals hinted at violence towards Aboriginal people, but omitted details (p. 78). Patterson was typical of his fellows in believing that killing was necessary to establish a rule of fear by the whites, recording in his diary 'I much fear that we will have to shoot a score or more of them before we can establish a funk of the white man in the native mind' (8 December 1871).

Despite the fact that these were obviously not the circumstances under which productive linguistic development could be expected to take place, some verbal communication, although clearly minimal, was occasionally attempted. Giles noted that a group of Aboriginal men communicated to him the fact that they had journeyed a long way to bring five other young men to see the Europeans (Giles 1926:97). Patterson's description of the violence following the alleged theft of the clothing seems to indicate that they knew an Aboriginal man to be 'the son of the old chief' and that they had at some time prior to the incident, named him 'Prince of Wales', information which tends to suggest some kind of minimal verbal communication. These events were, however, of little linguistic significance, although it is virtually certain that a few words and phrases survived to become the beginnings of the pidgin which was to be firmly established during the next two decades. Buchanen (1934:83), for example, was of the opinion that the pidgin English with which he could communicate in the region in the 1880s originated in the Overland Telegraph era. Early this century, some of the Aboriginal people who had become competent in the English-based pidgin, remembered that they had begun to acquire it in Overland Telegraph days. White (1918:148) was able to communicate in 1907 with an Aboriginal man who had worked as a pilot on the Roper River for supply vessels. These years 1871-1872 thus mark the historical beginnings of the English-based pidgin of the Roper River region, small as those beginnings may have been.

If the linguistic developments of those years were small, the social significance of the Overland Telegraph construction was immense. The line was joined on 22 August 1872. Although most of the construction workers returned south by 1873, a pattern of relations between black and white had been established which was characterised by hostility (Morphy and Morphy 1981:7) and which set the scene for European aggression and the Aboriginal response of guerilla warfare in the years which were to follow.

The opening up of the pastoral frontier and the rise of Aboriginal resistance 1872-1880

Although most of those involved with the Overland Telegraph had left by 1873, their task completed, the Roper River region would never be the same again. The Roper River itself was now literally on the map. The route northwards was now pegged out for all to follow by the telegraph line itself. Countless people were to journey along it from the south, others, travelling towards it westwards from Queensland, around the Gulf of Carpentaria in Leichhardt's tracks. All crossed the Roper River at Leichhardt's Bar. Initially, many were seeking the gold which the construction workers had discovered, but they were soon followed by the drovers seeking new pasture. Many were little more than 'outlaws', fugitives from justice seeking to escape the law in the remote frontier camps.

Apart from the few cattle, mostly beasts of burden, which accompanied the actual Overland Telegraph construction teams, the first stock 'overlanded' to the Roper River region were those brought by Ralph Milner. Intending to sell them to the Overland Telegraph workers for food, Milner left Port Augusta in South Australia with nearly five thousand animals, mostly sheep, in September 1870. Although perhaps half were lost on the way,¹¹⁰ Milner sold the remaining sheep at the Roper construction camp when he eventually arrived there in December 1871 (Ashwin 1927). Milner then went on to Darwin where he sold the

horses in June 1872. Over the next few years, several other mobs were driven overland, principally to supply the telegraph stations and the mining camps (Chapman 1950:69). Some of these were also driven from South Australia, two of the better known examples being Giles' trek with five thousand sheep and Ewart's with horses, both successfully completed in 1873 (Giles n.d.:3-17).¹¹¹ The first cattle to be brought from Queensland along Leichhardt's track were those driven by D'Arcy Uhr and Dillon Cox in 1872 (Giles n.d.:3; Daly 1887:219).

These early droving expeditions were normally accompanied by one or two Aboriginal stockmen or trackers from either South Australia or Queensland (e.g. Ashwin, 1927:48). Their main task, at which they were acknowledged to be far superior to European bushmen, was to detect the presence of other Aboriginal people. There was, however, only minimal contact between these transient southern Aboriginal people and the local Aboriginal groups through whose territories they passed. It is generally recorded that they were most apprehensive of unfamiliar Aboriginal people (Giles n.d.:passim; Ashwin 1927: 92) and there is little evidence of communication until some years later when the permanent pastoral properties were begun.

Although permanent pastoral properties were not established until the 1880s, there has not been a period since 1871 during which no European person was living in the Roper River region. Even after the departure of the Overland Telegraph construction workers, a small community of Europeans continued to live in the area of Leichhardt's Bar and at the Roper Landing. The so-called 'Old Coast Track' became the overland route to the Northern Territory (Ronan 1962:101; Linklater and Tapp 1968:59). The long hard trail from South Australia fell into relative disuse, mostly being used only as far as Central Australia where southern pastoral properties were leased and gradually stocked from South Australia. The 'Top-End' of the Northern Territory as well as the north-west of Western Australia were now generally approached through Queensland and settled as an extension of the pastoral settlement of Queensland. Thus the Roper River region became part of a moving frontier. The massacre of Aboriginal people on the North Queensland frontier from the 1860s onwards has been well documented by Loos (1982). Some twenty years later, the frontier was across the Queensland border and in the regions of the McArthur, Roper, and Victoria Rivers.

The 'Old Coast Track' began in Queensland at Burketown and led around the Gulf as close to the coast as river and creek fords would allow, crossing the border just east of the Calvert River. By keeping near the coast, the track led over essentially flat country in which the only barriers posed by the actual terrain itself were the large rivers. In the Northern Territory, the major rivers to be crossed were the McArthur, the Roper and, to a lesser extent, the Katherine. As swimming, for both people and cattle, posed a number of problems, these rivers were normally crossed at known shallow locations. The McArthur was crossed just above the present township of Borroloola, the Roper was crossed at Leichhardt's Bar and the Katherine at Knott's Crossing near the present town of Katherine.

These crossings obviously became staging-posts on the long trek, and as their use was in effect essential, small communities became established at each of them to service or, more accurately, to exploit the travellers. Of these three places, at least in the initial stages, only Katherine had a more legitimate reason for existence as it was already a telegraph station on the Overland

Telegraph. These small concentrations of permanent or semi-permanent European residents were to become focal points in the clash between European and Aboriginal society which took place in the final quarter of last century.

Linklater looks back on the Old Coast Track with nostalgia, going so far as to call it the Land of Romance (Linklater and Tapp 1968:59), but a romance the details of which we may never know.

... the story of Australia's most romantic highway is lost forever. For among the diggers and drovers, saints, poets and poddy-dodgers, who rode and plodded in the wake of the first handful, there was no-one to record this fantastic pilgrimage.

This claim is only partly correct. It is true, to use Linklater's and Tapp's own words (p. 59) that 'it will never be known how many died of thirst, drink and disease; how many were murdered, speared, or committed suicide' and so on. This is particularly so for the years 1873 to 1879, the period between the departure of the Overland Telegraph crews and the stocking of the pastoral properties. After that period a number of the better-known and more successful users of the track recorded their reminiscences in later life. These include Costello (1930), Buchanen (1934) and Linklater and Tapp (1968). Then there were those who recorded the reminiscences of others, the most important of whom is Durack (1959), but valuable impressions are also recorded in writers such as Ronan (1962). There are also insightful eye-witness accounts in the writings of Searcy (1909; 1912) regarding life at the McArthur and Roper crossings and useful comments in the police records relating to events at the same places. The oral traditions of the local Aboriginal people, ignored until relatively recently, also preserve the essential features of life during that era and of certain specific events. A number of more recent researchers have recorded some of these (e.g. Merlan 1978; Morphy and Morphy 1981; Read and Read 1980). All told, sufficient information remains for a generalised but nonetheless accurate picture of life in the region at that time to be built up. It is true that much of the detail can never be reconstructed and that the fate of many people, Aboriginal, European and Chinese, can never be known, but it is also true that time has not completely erased the memory of events which many would have thought to be best forgotten. It is also true that researchers have only recently begun to take an interest in this era, particularly the Aboriginal recollections of it (Merlan 1978:71).

It was, of course, only the Europeans who recorded any events at all, and so it is hardly surprising that the killings about which Europeans have the greatest knowledge are killings of Europeans by Aboriginal people. It is not known who the first Aboriginal person to be killed by Europeans in the Roper River region was, although it almost certainly occurred during the Overland Telegraph construction. The first European to be killed in the area was probably Charlie Johnston who was speared on 29 June 1875 (NTTG 17 July 1875). It is important, from the few official and unofficial reports available, to attempt to reconstruct the events on the Roper River which were the aftermath of the killing of Johnston. Although already commonplace in Queensland, the severity of European reprisal was unprecedented in the Northern Territory. It set a precedent of savage aggression which was violently and irreversibly to change Aboriginal society in the Roper River region forever.

In an immediate response to Johnston's death, a punitive expedition was organised in Darwin within a few hours and despatched across country under the leadership of J.A.G. Little. There appears to have been no shortage of volunteers, who set out 'with a large amount of ammunition'. Further reinforcements were picked up at Yam Creek, Pine Creek, Katherine and Daly Waters. Although the party included at least three police officers, Corporal Montagu and Police Troopers Wilkinson and Farrell, charged with the responsibility of arresting the culprits, no one in Darwin believed that that was what they really intended doing.

Nevertheless we have no fear of the result. The corporal is armed with warrants for the arrest of four blacks on a charge of murder — Pompey, Alligator Johnny, Jemmy Miller, and Ural. This sounds very English, but we fear the grandeur of English law will strike very little terror into these sable vagabonds. We feel quite sure that they will not deliver themselves up, and we feel equally sure that the party will save themselves the trouble of bringing them prisoners such a distance to serve no sensible purpose. The only things that have hitherto proved of any value in bringing the niggers to their senses have been dogs and revolvers; and we trust the party now gone out will not be afraid to use them. (NTTG 17 July 1875)

The punitive party had been organised by the local magistrate in the absence of the Government Resident, but on the Resident's return, a second punitive expedition was despatched by sea in the *Flying Cloud*. As Morphy and Morphy (1981:10) point out, before either of these expeditions arrived, Europeans in the region had already taken matters into their own hands and were indiscriminately avenging Johnston's death.

William Batten and nine other men 'dispersed a party of natives' who were camped at Mount McMinn and 'did their best to avenge Johnston's death' (NTTG 18 Sept. 1875). If Batten was the same man as Burton, mentioned in official documents, then officially Batten's party killed only one Aboriginal person which is to say that the killing of only one person ('with a hole shot through the chest') was the only killing that was formally acknowledged (SAA 790/1875: 430). The newspaper reported a similar attack on an Aboriginal camp by 'Latour and party'.

At Mount McMinn Little's party found some letters buried, supposed to have been written by Latour and party, who had passed the Bar since on the way to Queensland. They stated that they came upon a very large camp of natives, and found they were in possession of most of the things missed during the attack, so they dispersed them thoroughly; and as they, Little's party, found remains of natives, no doubt fully avenged Johnston's death. (NTTG 18 Sept. 1875)

It took some weeks for Little's overland party to reach the Roper, arriving at Leichhardt's Bar on 2 August. They commenced their reprisals against all Aboriginal people in the vicinity as soon as they arrived, probably even before that. One reported offensive was against an Aboriginal camp at Harris Lagoon, where 'two chiefs names Abareeba and Harry Byng were killed in attempting to escape' (NTTG 18 Sept. 1875). The *Flying Cloud* arrived on 20 August and this party too immediately commenced their attacks on Aboriginal people in the area.

Official reports (SAA, 18 Sept 1875) show that only one actual arrest was made by the official parties, a man called Ural (NTTG 18 Sept. 1875) who voluntarily boarded the *Flying Cloud* as a pilot and who was believed by many to be innocent. The Northern Territory Times thought it a pity that he had been arrested, preferring that he had been 'made an example of' on the spot, 'in the presence of the niggers themselves' (18 Sept. 1875). All Aboriginal people encountered over a period of many weeks were shot at, but the results of the attacks were only reported in vague general terms. It is not possible to determine the number of Aboriginal people who were killed but the number must have been considerable as the official parties remained in the area for nearly two months doing little else but seek out and shoot at the local people. Official reports mask the true events. It was said that on 24 July (which must have been en route to the Roper), 'the niggers got among the bushes and escaped', on 20 August, they 'attacked a party of natives under the Calder range', on 30 August 'lubras captured on Hawks Nest Island' and on 4 September the party 'attacked and dispersed a body of natives at Moles Hill' (SAA 790/1875:439).

If one examines other subsequent reports of official or police reprisal or punitive raids in which large numbers of Aboriginal people were massacred, the similarity of the language of the reports is obvious, as, too, is the careful understatement and the lack of explicit detail. All of this points to the fact that these reprisals were a coldly calculated militaristic campaign over a prolonged period for the express purpose of wiping out as many Aboriginal people as possible and instilling fear of the Europeans into the remainder. Although the first aim was no doubt achieved, in this latter purpose, the reprisal was unsuccessful. As most if not all of the victims would have been innocent, the Aboriginal people could not have given these type of actions any interpretation other than that the Europeans were forcefully and violently taking over their lands. Although the killings instilled a healthy respect for the lethal potential of European firearms, the killings also tightened Aboriginal people's resolve to resist as aggressively as possible the European invasion and to do so more intelligently and in the only modes possible by the use of stealth, ambush and surprise attack.

No longer did the Aboriginal people attempt to frighten the Europeans away by large groups of armed warriors and a show of force, for they had learnt that open confrontation would fail in the face of superior arms. Furthermore, by the end of the 1870s, some of the expeditions moving along the track had become what must have seemed to the local Aboriginal people to be unimaginably immense.

The first herd of cattle driven overland to stock a pastoral run, as opposed to cattle brought in for slaughtering, were those of Travers and Gibson in 1878, which arrived at Glencoe Station, to the north of the Katherine River in 1879 (Chapman 1950:69). These were twelve hundred head of cattle driven by Nat Buchanen and the Gordon brothers from Aramac Station in Central Queensland. The party included several other Europeans and two 'black boys' (Buchanen 1934:44-46). This was a daunting enough expedition for Aboriginal people to consider resisting, but it was small compared with what was to follow. Over the next few years the procession of cattle herds from New South Wales and Queensland to the Northern Territory became almost continuous. By 1884, it was estimated officially that 20,000 head of cattle were in transit on the Old Coast Track at any one time (SAA 790/1884:1008). Nat Buchanen alone was

commissioned in 1881 to deliver 20,000 head of cattle to Glencoe Station, by then the property of Fisher and Lyons (Buchanan 1934:59). Most of the cattle were driven from stations near St. George in southern Queensland, split into several mobs a few days apart.

In the face of the size of these cavalcades and the superiority of the European weapons, the Aboriginal resistance fighters sought out the lone traveller, the isolated group, the unwary and the unprotected, only attacking the huge cattle cavalcades by spearing cattle at night around the far edges of the mobs and by stealthily seeking out Europeans in their unguarded moments.

It is generally in moments of fancied security that the nigger's spear is launched, and nine times out of ten he makes a clean job of it. If natives are in large no's and the white party small, they will occasionally, though very rarely attack openly. They prefer at all times to resort to treachery, rather than to open violence ...
(Mason 1909:44)

This was the beginning of what can only be described as guerilla-style active resistance by Aboriginal people to the European invasion of their lands. Their new tactics have only ever been mentioned by those who were hostile to aboriginal intentions and unsympathetic to their motives, but many of these descriptions nevertheless give a clear picture of guerilla-style warfare and of carefully planned actions rather than haphazard or chance encounters — what Mounted Constable Willshire (1896:5) called '... the scheming designs of aborigines who plot and contrive to take the heart's blood of white men'. Willshire, notorious for his involvement in repeated massacres of Aboriginal people, describes these methods in his book of reminiscences.

In writing about the natives of the Katherine, Daly, Gregory, Roper, and Victoria Rivers, I am mentioning a blood-thirsty lot of fierce savages, who throw the spear with unerring aim, and watch their opportunities to kill unfortunate men who are off their guard.
(Willshire 1896:7)

They watch for you, they lie in ambush and the treacherous beings crawl stealthily upon the weary white traveller at night-time. (p.26)

They wait for the boss and stockmen to leave the station, and then come in and murder the cook and steal the rations ...
(p.50)

... They work hard and display phenomenal endurance at killing cattle or stealing sheep, which I have known them to carry twenty miles over rough country. They are cunning enough to seek refuge in the most inaccessible places, where mounted men cannot go, such as glens, gorges, caves and other obscure places at present unknown to white men. They ascend high cliffs on either side where a road goes through the pass, and throw and roll huge rocks and boulders down when white men are going through. (p.50)

The Aboriginal resisters utilised their well-developed system of smoke signals to send and receive intelligence in the continuing guerilla war.

They make smoke signals to one another from range to range and mount to mount; they tell each other by smoke signals that the native police are about ... Two smokes close together and going up at the same time was a signal for the boys and lubras travelling with us 'to run away the first chance'; a big dense smoke going straight up at long intervals meant 'the police are about'; a broad smoke running along the side of a range, and continuing to rise now and again meant they were travelling, the smoke itself gave the direction they were going. (p.51)

There were a few particularly effective guerilla fighters who gained notoriety far beyond the particular lands for which they were fighting. Such were Pigeon and Major in the early years of this century (see Buchanan 1934:168-173 and Shaw 1982). Recent enough to be remembered by the oldest Aboriginal people, they are 'well on the way to becoming folk-heroes' (Powell 1982a:135). Even as early as John Costello's era at Valley of the Springs in the 1880s, there were dedicated and ruthless resisters whose names were known to the Europeans and whose legendary exploits made them feared. One such fighter was Murrimicki.

Murrimicki let no white man pass who could be killed with safety. From the descriptions, by semi-domesticated natives, this old warrior was something of a strategist — always choosing his point of attack near a favourable vantage ground of retreat, and ever selecting his night camps, too, in safe positions for escape in the event of sudden raids. (Costello 1930:172)

European reprisal, however, was fierce, relentless and, more often than not, greatly out of proportion to the extent of the crimes committed against them. As was shown in the response to Johnston's death in 1875, excessive reprisal characterised both official and unofficial punitive action and Aboriginal people were indiscriminately shot irrespective of whether they were guilty or innocent. As one of the 'pioneers' himself admitted:

The white robbed the native of his tribal territories, denuded his hunting grounds, confiscated the water supplies, and made native life generally impossible. The black retaliated by the only means known to him. But the spear and the nulla nulla could not match rifle and revolver, and the white man's chains were strong. There is no doubt that during the cattle migration and the gold rush to the Kimberleys, the whites shot down the blacks like crows all along the route. (Linklater and Tapp 1968:74)

The Aboriginal resistance was doomed in the long term to fail. They were not evicting or eliminating a few foreigners daring to trespass uninvited upon their lands. They were, rather, declaring themselves opposed to the white Australian nation, indeed as some have rightly said, to the British Empire. In retrospect, it is obvious that the odds were in the long term overwhelmingly against them.

Certainly, some Europeans were killed who were innocent of any personal violence against Aboriginal people and certainly, as Powell (1982a:130) points out, some of the killings by Aboriginal people have all of the hallmarks of murder for material gain. For a long time, however, these killings have been

emphasised and have distracted attention from the European atrocities committed against Aboriginal people which were much more numerous, much less justifiable and, it must be said, sometimes accompanied by torture. The few recorded examples of such atrocities perpetrated against Aboriginal people are evidence of much more widespread but unrecorded cruelty. Even Alfred Searcy, who was not averse to what he termed 'necessary shooting' recorded his disgust at the wanton cruelty of certain Europeans in the Roper River region.

There can be no doubt that at times many of the blacks have been put away by some brutes just for the fun of killing, by others for revenge, but mostly the niggers brought the trouble on themselves by interfering with the cattle. In many of these cases no report ever reached the police. In one instance, so a man told me who was concerned in it, a whole nigger camp was wiped out. Some years ago I got a letter from a man who was attacked by the niggers in the Gulf country, and received some eleven spear wounds. He recovered. In his letter he said, 'I now shoot at sight; killed to date thirty seven'. Thus it will ever be in developing a new country where the aborigines are at all hostile, and where there is no recognised authority to deal with them. A man who goes into the out-beyond country in a measure carries his life in his own hands. He may throw it away, as many do, or he may take measures to protect his life and property, which — to those who live where the law and police can always be applied to — may appear cruel and harsh. Not for a moment would I defend those who wantonly shoot down the blacks, but it must always be remembered that at times stern measures, and even shooting, are necessary.

One man, I remember well, boasted to me that he never carried a revolver. He said he did all the punishment he wanted with a stock-whip and a wire-cracker. 'When I want to be particularly severe', he remarked, 'I cut the top off a sapling and sharpen the remaining stump, bend it down, and drive it through the palms of both hands of the nigger'. That seemed awfully brutal to me, but that man assured me on his oath that he did it. I wonder whether the cruelty he practised ever came back to him in his struggle for life in the river — he was drowned in the Katherine.
(Searcy 1909:173-175)

Another example of torture was described, during the trial of the Aboriginal man who killed Jim Campbell, by a woman from the Roper River region, although the incident itself occurred further to the north. Masson (1915:168) was present in the court and recorded a great deal of the evidence.

Before she left the box, the Counsel for the Defence rose and asked her if she had known old man Nadjimo, who once worked with Jim Campbell.

"Yaas, me savvy him before." And the story of Nadjimo then came out. "Jim Campbell growl longa old man Nadjimo. Bimeby he killem (hit him) long back, takem dis way (by his leg and arm), puttem longa boiler (boiler for trepang), takem out and killem longa ground all day."

In the light of what might have been considered to be accepted Western values, morality was suspended at the frontier. As Turner (1945:38) said of the American frontier, 'the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant'. So it was in the North Australian frontier that any regret over the large-scale killing of Aboriginal people was totally eclipsed by indignation that any white man should be killed for pushing the frontier forward.

The autobiographies and reminiscences of the early cattle drovers and pastoralists abound with detailed accounts of the killing of Europeans. Buchanen (1934), for example, records the details of a number of attacks, details with which he clearly took liberties, given that neither he nor any other European witnessed most of the attacks he describes.

The killing of Jack Travers, cook for Buchanen's party, was one such event. He was decapitated south of the Roper River, near the Limmen River in 1878. Buchanen (1934:53) describes in graphic detail the stealth of the Aboriginal attackers, the position of the lone Travers at the time, bending over his damper dish, the flash of the axe 'in the cruel midday glare', the severed head of Travers falling into the dish, the quantity of blood, the position of the body, the unfired revolver, the items which were subsequently stolen and so on.

In stark contrast, the details of the reprisal carried out against the local Aboriginal people are not given nor even the number killed. The event is dismissed in a single sentence.

Thus reinforced, before resuming the march, a punitive expedition was organized against Travers's murderers who met with just retribution. (Buchanen 1934:55)

Buchanen is equally terse in his descriptions of other reprisals such as that at the McArthur River in 1883, following the killing of Fraser, a miner on his way to the goldfields. The reprisal occurred some days or weeks later.

Darcy Uhr, while after some stock which had been scattered by the natives, happened to arrive at the camp at the time, and with two trackers, undertook the duty of dispersing the black criminals. This he did with his usual thoroughness ... (Buchanen 1934:80)

As Durack (1959:256) implies, however, the initial effect of these reprisals was an even stronger tightening of the resolve of Aboriginal people to resist as aggressively as possible the incursion of Europeans and their cattle. In discussing the Duracks' passage through the Roper River region in 1884 en route to the Ord River, she writes

Punitive parties, meting out stern retribution for the death of Jack Travers, the cook in Nat Buchanen's party who had had his head chopped off while bent over his baking dish, had done nothing to intimidate them.

There were, no doubt, among the drovers and cattle men, those who would have left the Aboriginal people unmolested had they not been attacked themselves or felt themselves to be in danger of attack. They believed, however, that what they were doing was essentially right. Some even gave grudging admission that the Aboriginal people had some kind of right to the land and therefore the right also to resist the intruders. They nevertheless could not accept that it was anything but just and inevitable that the Aboriginal people should be

subdued in order that the destiny of the whites should be fulfilled. It is interesting to note the opinions of the cattle overlanders, even though they were penned years later and with hindsight.

To these first comers ... bound to the context of their times, they were simply 'niggers', another hazard to be overcome with the rest. If it was to be a battle for survival there would be no question of sentiment or the black man's rights. (Durack 1959:256)

The white man risked everything to make a place in the wilderness, and the black robbed him of his just reward by killing his livestock, or harrassing it until its value was negligible. (Linklater and Tapp 1968:74)

That Old Coast Road was still the only feasible track between east and west. It was at a much later date, after the Murranji track was opened up, that the original road became known as the 'Insolvency Track' along which no one travelled if he was game to go anywhere else ... a graveyard for men, horses, cattle, money and enthusiasm ... It was a place of treachery: treachery hidden in the towering grass of its swampy plains, and the crocodile-infested reaches of its watercourses. From the first day of settlement there it had been unceasing guerrilla warfare with the natives. It had been dirty fighting on both sides, but then guerrilla warfare always is dirty ... (Ronan 1962:104)

The names of many of the great cattle drovers have become legendary. Some, like Buchanan, Durack and Uhr became legendary in their own time. As all the later autobiographies and reminiscences show, these men were widely known throughout the frontier and held in high esteem by their fellows. Not all the exploits which gained them that esteem, however, bear close scrutiny.

D'Arcy Uhr was one who was widely respected. Buchanan (1934:80) hints at some of the ways in which that respect was gained when he says that Uhr carried out a reprisal raid against Aboriginal people with his 'usual thoroughness'. An article in the *South Australian Register* (10 Sept. 1884) confirms that Uhr had at one time been a Sub-Inspector of Police in Queensland with the 'black force'. In that capacity among his more famous exploits were the massacre of approximately thirty Aboriginal people for spearing some horses near Burketown in north-western Queensland, and in the same locality, the massacre of a similar number following the murder of a man by the name of Cameron (Loos 1982:37). The Burketown correspondent to the *Brisbane Courier* at the time was exultant.

Everybody in the district is delighted with the wholesale slaughter dealt out by the native police and thank Mr Uhr for his energy in ridding the district of fifty nine myalls.¹¹²

Having been a police officer, perhaps it was easy for Uhr to believe he had the right to take the law into his own hands, but then so did everyone else. Looking back and reflecting upon the era, Buchanan argued that in the long run, the ends justified the means, summary 'justice' was, finally, the white man's duty.

In those days there were no police within three hundred miles. Every man was his own policeman; and the letter of the law was often ignored in favour of summary justice. And although the white man far removed from the restraints of formal law sometimes perhaps rivalled his black brother in savage reprisal, on the whole the treatment of the natives compared favourable with white methods all over the world ... In priority of occupation these dark people are possibly the rightful owners of the soil. But the white man has his duty to do, as he sees it ...
(Buchanan 1934:117)

The 'white man's duty' was in this case to conquer and to dispossess because of what Bishop Gibney called his 'insatiable earth hunger' (Durack 1959:318). In the universal context of European expansion, Allen (1959:xii) has summarised the situation as the white aggressor has always seen it.

Because he (the pioneer) is a civilised man and not a primitive, he regards this (the frontier) as a temporary phase; he is not there to come to terms with the outback, as his native predecessors tended to do, but to conquer in the name of civilisation.

Minimal language contact, 1872-1880

It was shown in the previous chapter that the explorers almost certainly tried to speak to the local Aboriginal people in some form of pidgin but it is evident that little if any actual verbal communication was ever achieved. As discussed already, some minimal verbal communication was attempted and achieved during the period of the Overland Telegraph construction and it seems likely that thirty or forty years later, Aboriginal people, in looking back on that era, perceived it as marking the beginning of language change.

As has been shown above, from that time, 1872 to 1880, there was an increasing, if transient, European presence throughout the whole region. Many of these Europeans had no interest in communicating with the local Aboriginal people and, in particular, had no interest in establishing verbal contact of any kind with them. Most of the drovers, moreover, actually brought Aborigines with them from Queensland or from New South Wales or South Australia. Communication between these Aboriginal stockmen and the European drovers was carried out in the 'southern' pidgin. A few examples are recorded in the literature.

(In 1871) 'Fanny' the gin said "Wild fellow no good.
Piccaninny time him growl." (Ashwin 1927:59)

The scant references to these Aboriginal members of droving parties indicate that they were highly unlikely to engage in any form of verbal communication with the local Aboriginal people. They are normally said to have been quite apprehensive about any contact with them. On the other hand, some of these Aboriginal people remained with the white settlers as they established their pastoral properties, and it is clear that under new circumstances such as those, they would have had increased opportunities and needs to converse with members of the local group — but that is not an issue before the 1880s.

As noted earlier, in the decade following the Overland Telegraph construction, the opportunities for verbal interaction were severely limited indeed. Relations between the invading Europeans and the Aboriginal owners were generally hostile and not conducive to any communication other than violence.

The only exception may have been in the vicinity of the tiny frontier towns — if that is what they can be called — of Borroloola, Roper Bar and Katherine, but this is only conjecture. No description of life there is available before the 1880s. The information which is available a few years later, however, indicates that the local Aboriginal people had already been subjugated to a great extent in the vicinity of the towns. This suggests the development of a pidgin, but no examples have as yet been located in the literature or in archival material. It is, on the other hand, certain that a few Aboriginal people in the Roper Bar region had been given English names. Some were named earlier than 1875, including, for example, some of those killed in reprisal for the death of Charlie Johnston. The use of names must indicate some degree of verbal communication, but of the extent or nature of this communication, evidence has not yet been located. It was a lawless and largely undocumented era. Very few people bothered to record anything at all.

In Darwin, under more peaceable circumstances, an English-based pidgin had developed and was in common use. Even in the mining camps south of Darwin, where European presence was at least semi-permanent, there is clear evidence of the use of a pidgin for communication between Aboriginal and European people. On the pastoral frontier, there were few, if any, of the transient Europeans who had the need or desire to communicate, so what use of pidgin English there was, was restricted to more isolated or unusual circumstances. The full development of the pidgin had to await permanent European presence throughout the region.

Permanent European presence and its consequences.

The establishment of pastoral properties

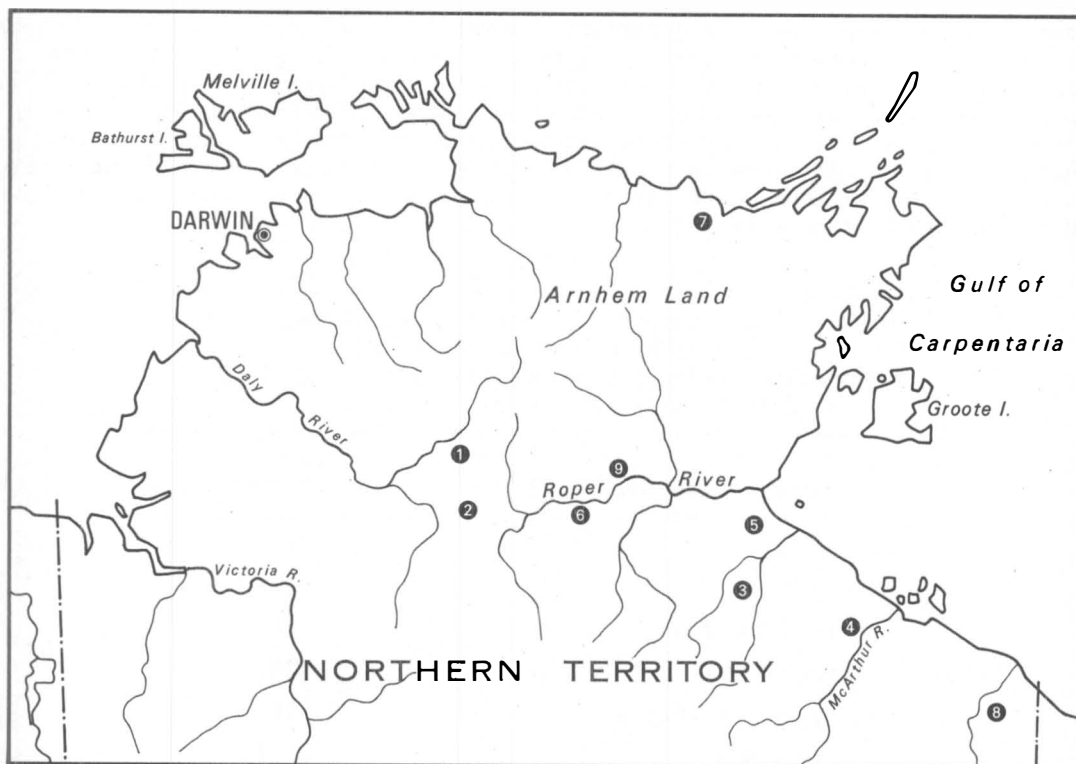
'Conquering in the name of civilisation' in the Roper River region meant the establishment of cattle stations and an end to Aboriginal resistance. Pastoralists began to settle permanently in the region during the 1880s, although on the far western edge of the region of major interest, Giles (n.d.:133) had established Springvale Station at Katherine in 1879 (Duncan 1967:161). It is difficult to make definite claims about the dates of founding of pastoral properties in the 1880s for a number of reasons. Official records were not well kept at the time, and they were often little more than intelligent guesses. Some of these records no longer exist. Some of the people involved confuse dates in their recorded reminiscences. Furthermore, there was much difference between the taking out of a lease and the establishment of a permanent pastoral property or cattle station. There was a large, frantic, so-called 'Pastoral Boom' between 1880 and 1882, but it was largely an on-paper boom. As Bauer (1964:111-114) clearly shows, almost all of the Northern Territory was leased by 1881 for purely speculative reasons. 'Large areas which were unexplored and entirely unsuitable for pastoral purposes were applied for from Adelaide without the applicants ever seeing a yard of the country they claimed.' (p.112)

Regulations required that the leases be stocked within a specified time. Consequently, many leases were forfeited without any attempt at stocking. Some of these leases were then taken up by other speculators. Attempts to stock some leases failed altogether, but leases in the more pastorally suitable regions were generally held by 'squatters who meant stocking' (SAPP 105/1881). Serious efforts were made by these often experienced people to stock their leases and to develop them as permanent stations. The most important of these in the Roper River region are listed below in Table 6. Their position is shown on the map (Map 7) on page 202.

Table 6: Major pastoral properties established in the Roper River region 1879-1885 (Chapman 1950:72-86; Bauer 1964:111-114; Duncan 1967:161; Bern 1974:75-76; Holmes 1963:161) ^{1 1 3}	
NAME OF STATION	DATE OF INITIAL SETTLEMENT
1. Springvale	1879
2. Elsey	1882
3. Bauhinia Downs	1883
4. McArthur River	1883
5. Valley of the Springs	1884
6. Hodgson Downs	1884
7. Florida	1885
8. Calvert	1885
9. Urapunga	1885 ^{1 1 4}

These permanent cattle stations changed the nature of the confrontation between the Aboriginal inhabitants and the white intruders. For the Aboriginal resisters, permanent European presence in their lands generally resulted in an initial intensification of their guerrilla resistance, particularly in those areas where frequent European intrusion had already occurred. In the long term, however, the beginnings of permanent changes were also the beginnings of the end of resistance. Where permanent cattle stations were established, the Aboriginal resistance tactics became less successful. The Europeans in each property now regularly patrolled a restricted area of land and fortified themselves in fenced homesteads with dogs and Aboriginal stockmen from elsewhere, so that stealth and knowledge of the land, the local Aboriginal people's two major strategic advantages, were now less tactically significant.

As well, being individuals, different Aboriginal people and Aboriginal groups reacted variably to this new set of conditions. Their various responses included everything from continued and renewed resistance, active separation by distancing themselves from the intruders, to acceptance of and even exploiting of the whites.



Map 7: Earliest pastoral properties in the Roper River region.
(Numbers refer to names in Table 6.)

These differential responses are well illustrated in the account by Michael Costello (1930) of his father John's efforts to settle permanently his Valley of the Springs property in the early 1880s. The arrival of Costello's party differed from all other parties because they came up the Limmen River by sea. They were initially accorded a warm welcome by the local people, a fact which Costello attributed, probably quite correctly, to the 'Macassans' and the long association between coastal Aboriginal people and visitors from the sea.

With the coming of the schooner "Activity", the aborigines made their first friendly overtures. They had probably been accustomed, for generations, to the Malay trepang fishers who, periodically, visited the northern shores of Australia during the seasons when the beche-de-mer or sea slug was harvested. At any rate, whatever shyness they may have felt before men who travelled the land on horses, they had none for those who went down to the sea in ships.

As the "Activity" slowly sounded its way up the Limmen, the natives gathered on the river banks, shouting, gesticulating and making friendly signs of welcome, some even going out in their bark canoes, gave practical assistance by signals and

directions as to the best and deepest channels in which to navigate the vessel. It was wonderful, too, the knowledge they had of the submerged rocks, shoals, sandbanks and all places to be avoided.

They fared well for white man's food during this excursion. A number of them came right up the river to the landing place of the "Activity", and six great athletic fellows, accompanied the teams with the loads of discharged goods. (Costello 1930:134-135)

It would appear that their early euphoria was short-lived. The Aboriginal people soon discovered that Europeans who came by sea to set up a cattle station were the same race of people who elsewhere arrived on horseback with bullock drays and guns. Within a short space of time, the majority of them decided to distance themselves and remain aloof from the new homestead. A small group remained camped within the gorge which Costello had fenced as a stockyard. One man, however, whom Costello named Dick, associated himself closely with the homestead and chose to stay there. This man rapidly gained 'sufficient knowledge of English to make himself understood' and became a stockman (Costello 1930:135).

'Dick' appears to have been the only local person who demonstrated any acceptance of the Europeans. It could even be argued that both his presence there and the maintenance of the small camp nearby were strategically designed for the Aboriginal people's own purposes. Dick eventually abandoned Costello to return to his own people. For all the thirteen or fourteen years of the Valley of the Springs, Aboriginal people continually killed or harassed Costello's stock. Costello regularly complained about this to the authorities.¹¹⁵ He was finally forced to abandon Valley of the Springs in 1893 (Duncan 1967:161). Although the diminishing market for Northern Territory beef and the huge problem of the tick-born 'redwater fever' must have been serious factors (Costello 1930:185-186; Bauer 1964:116-119), Costello also blamed the Aboriginal resistance for his withdrawal.

In fact, a number of pastoral properties within the Roper River region were abandoned in the early 1890s. The economic situation was unfavourable and the country often unsuitable for cattle but the resistance by the Aboriginal people was nonetheless seen as a major factor in the decision to withdraw. Aboriginal people in north-eastern Arnhem Land still tell the stories of atrocities and massacres committed on Florida station in the 1880s. I have often heard how the Aboriginal people were at first unfamiliar with guns and thought to escape them by climbing trees where they became easy targets and how a large group of unsuspecting children were lined up and shot. Searcy (1909:185) noted that in 1886, any Aboriginal people who crossed the Goyder River to the side on which Florida homestead was built was shot on sight. The response to these atrocities was renewed aggression on the part of the Aboriginal resisters, clearly one of the main factors which led J.A. Macartney to abandon Florida station in 1893.

Hostile blacks and sour, unsuitable country wiped out most of the cattle and scattered the remainder far and wide. (Buchanan 1934:100)

It is obvious that such withdrawals would have encouraged Aboriginal people to believe that they had successfully repelled an invasion and even the Europeans conceded a victory, albeit temporary, to the original inhabitants. There were,

on the other hand, places where the subjugation or 'pacification' of the original inhabitants was achieved. The 'quietening' of the Mangarayi people on Elsey station, for example, has been well documented by Merlan (1978). It is not easy to determine just why the Aboriginal people were 'pacified' more rapidly and successfully in some places than they were in others. The relevant factors would have certainly included the differential attitudes of the European settlers to the Aboriginal people, the proportion of the local Aboriginal people prepared to tolerate or accept the European presence, the size of the European establishment, the degree to which the site of the station interfered with the Aboriginal people's subsistence activities or sacred obligations and the proximity of the station to reinforcement or police aid. Among all these and many other factors, it can be observed that it was typical of those properties which survived the guerilla resistance that they had rapidly acquired a large group of Aboriginal people resigned to or accepting of the European presence who not only provided a source of labour but also served as a buffer between the Europeans and the more aggressive resisters.

As Merlan (1978:79) describes it, Elsey Station was leased in 1877 by Abraham Wallace and stocked between 1880 and 1882 with cattle driven from Sturt's Meadows Station in New South Wales. At Elsey Creek, when the first party arrived, the Aboriginal people were friendly - perhaps they were among those who later established friendly rapport with the station. Others, however, resented the intrusion and Elsey's first head stockman, Duncan Campbell, was speared not long after, some 100 kilometres to the east while mustering cattle. The then Government Resident in Darwin, Edward Price, despatched an armed pursuit party under Corporal Montagu, at the same time sending a telegram to the South Australian Minister responsible for the Northern Territory which read in part:

Most earnestly and respectfully recommend act to be passed giving power to try natives for murder here and if guilty to execute them at scene of murder (stop) Outrages by natives increasing as they seem to think they can only be imprisoned. (SAA 790/1882:412)

This latter statement may have been true in Darwin, but it is doubtful whether, in 1882, any Aboriginal people in the Elsey district understood anything of the white man's law. The police officer in charge of the pursuit party was the same Mounted Constable Montagu who had been involved in the reprisals for Johnston's death in 1875 and whose name was to become linked with many police reprisals involving the massacre of Aboriginal people during those years. Typically, it is not really known just what Montagu's party achieved except that he arrested a Queensland Aboriginal man and he failed to capture the real culprit (SAA 790/1882:571; SAA 790/1885:626). Much of what the police did in such circumstances was, in any case, never actually reported.

For a brief period at Elsey Station in 1885, the Northern Territory came closest to having a force of 'Native Police' like that which operated in Queensland. It was intended that the force of two European constables and six 'native policemen' should be located at Elsey Station for the purpose of patrolling the whole of the Roper River region, which was seen as having particular problems. The Aboriginal members were recruited in Alice Springs and brought north by Mounted Constable Willshire, a man already responsible for widespread extermination of Aboriginal people in the Centre and described by Police Inspector Foelsche as 'eminently qualified for the duty' (SAA 790/1885:388).

The native force was finally placed under the control of Mounted Constables Power and Curtis. Although it was always intended that they should work in the Roper River region, they spent the first few months of 1885 in Pine Creek. They are said to have finally reached the Elsey Station in April 1885 and patrolled the Roper River region for just over a year. Although, as Merlan (1978:83) notes, the 1844 correspondence of the Inspector of Police, Foelsche, concerned the construction of adequate quarters at Elsey Station for the police, there is conflicting evidence regarding their location which is difficult to reconcile with their supposed location at Elsey. A police report by Inspector Waters, who followed Foelsche, states that the

two European and six native constables were stationed at Mount McMinn, Roper River, to keep order amongst the aborigines who, at that time, were very troublesome and had committed numerous crimes. (Waters 1913:102)

This statement is consistent with the fact that Aboriginal people at Roper River still refer to an area near Mount McMinn as 'Police Paddock', a term in use in the 1880s to designate the fenced areas near police stations where the horses for the mounted police were kept. The oral tradition in the Roper River area is that prior to the police station at Roper Bar which was established in 1889, there was a semi-permanent police establishment at Mount McMinn where police camped in tents (J. Sandefur, personal communication). Searcy (1909: 154) actually visited 'Corporal Power, who had his camp at Mount M'Minn' while at the Roper Bar in 1886. The group was disbanded at the end of that year (Waters 1913:102). As Merlan (1978:84) observes, there appears to be little record of any of the activities of the native police while they were in the Roper River area. Their 'official' task was to apprehend 'Charlie' who, it had been decided, was the real murderer of Duncan Campbell. According to Waters (1913:101), the murderer of Duncan Campbell was eventually 'shot when resisting arrest'. Although this is the only information I have been able to locate, there is no reason to presume that Power did anything other than carry out his task of pacifying Aboriginal people in the manner in which he had done it in the past and was to do it in the future. He was one of the few fellow-policemen who was admired by the notorious Willshire for his 'bravery', 'fearlessness', 'intrepidity' and 'arrests in the bush' (Willshire 1896: 53, 89). Of the majority of others, Willshire claimed (p.90) that they would 'require a clean pair of pants nearly every attack I made'.

Indeed, it is my view that Merlan's inability to locate records of the activities of Corporal Power and the Native Police is not an archival problem. The reason is much more sinister. The years 1885 and 1886 mark an intensification of European anti-Aboriginal activities. In particular, these were the years in which conscious decisions were taken not to report upon or investigate the activities of the police or anyone else involved in the killing of Aboriginal people.¹¹⁶ No doubt, in the light of this, it can be presumed that the activities of Corporal Power and his assistants were a significant factor in the eventual pacification of the Roper River region.

If the police were now beyond the law, the public of the frontier were no longer constrained by it, if indeed they ever had been. Merlan (1978), for example, from her careful analysis of the oral literature of the Mangarayi people, has amply demonstrated that even after the departure of the 'resident police contingent' under Corporal Power, the killings continued for some time.

Despite Jeannie Gunn's romanticising of the 'bush-folk', the European stockmen and others in and around Elsey Station in *We of the Never Never*, it is evident that they were not necessarily the people she painted them.

The white man said to have been the principal organizer of the shootings around Elsey is remembered by the Aborigines as 'Miglinin'. He had been, they say, one of Mr. Gunn's stockmen and was well-known in the area. Presumably he was the 'Sanguine Scot', John MacLennan, of *We of the Never Never*. (Merlan 1978:87)

Merlan (1978) has recorded specific Aboriginal recollections of 'Miglinin' and his involvement in a number of killings. It is obvious that MacLennan was in no way atypical. There are many stories of how Aboriginal people on pastoral properties were shot for nothing more than refusing to co-operate with the European cattlemen. The wish expressed by the Government Resident, that Aboriginal offenders could be hanged in their own country and before their own people was eventually granted, and it became police practice for many years. Aboriginal people in the Elsey and Roper River areas still preserve the oral account of the hanging of Mululurun (Merlan 1978:80; Read and Read 1978:62). The event had a very profound effect on the people and all along the valley of the Roper from Elsey to Ngukurr, it is still remembered.

Aboriginal people tend now to look back on a particular massacre, a particular shooting or a particular hanging and see that event as marking the end of resistance in their country. As Jess James Garalgnan jag and Maudie Mangui put it when interviewed by Jay Read (Read and Read 1978:74) at Djembere:

Then people come quiet now from after that feller bin get shot now ... white man bin settlem down blackfeller now ... might as well him bin just give up ... and we might as well sit down ... that when they bin havem that station.

From the sociolinguistic point of view, the 'settling down' of Aboriginal people on the cattle stations institutionalised contact between linguistically different people who had thus far been scattered and discontinuous and made such contact a daily fact of life. This language contact and the need to communicate made the cattle stations a significant milieu of pidgin development.

In these situations, there was a station homestead where the European owner or manager lived. He may, like Costello, have had a wife and family, or like Elsey station before the arrival of Jeannie Gunn, there may have been no European women or children. There were always a number of European stockmen, sometimes some Aboriginal stockmen from elsewhere and, more often than not, a Chinese cook, all of whom were usually quartered near the homestead. At a small distance away was the Aboriginal camp where those Aboriginal families lived who had chosen to accept station life and a degree of European control. The younger men were employed as stockmen, while the women were employed as domestics. Details of typical station life can be gleaned from Gunn (1905, 1908).

At varying degrees of distance from the Aboriginal people of the station, lived other, progressively more remote members of their speech community and of the social groupings to which they belonged. The Europeans tended to try to keep this latter group beyond the borders of their lease, an impossible situation for these Aboriginal people when the leases adjoined or when the lease included

sites of ritual or subsistence importance. Over the years throughout the pastoral frontier, more and more of these people gave up their efforts to maintain independence and resigned themselves to station life.

This produced an ideal environment for the development of a pidgin, but the point must be made that this was not a plantation-type situation with slave labour. Certainly, there were occasions when Aboriginal people were forced to work at a particular place.¹¹⁷ Although there may, therefore, have sometimes been little choice, Aboriginal people in the pastoral frontier during the 1880s and 1890s were not necessarily compelled to live or work on cattle stations. Indeed, it is the fact that Aboriginal people could and did leave employment that brought them the most criticism as workers. Normally such departures related to ceremonial responsibilities, but were derogated as 'walkabout' by most Europeans.

Despite the fact that this was not a master/slave situation in the sense in which it is usually understood, it was still definitely one of superiority/inferiority. The Europeans considered themselves socially superior and most Aboriginal people, resigned to their presence, accepted it. The ethnic and linguistic mix on the cattle stations consisted therefore of a large group of local Aboriginal people, a small group of socially superior Europeans and smaller numbers of other groups, such as Aboriginal people from elsewhere and Chinese station employees.

As noted in Chapter 6, the Chinese were a small but significant presence on the cattle stations. As Gunn (1908:passim) shows, the medium of communication was a form of pidgin English. The relationship between this and Chinese Pidgin English was also mentioned in Chapter 6 in connection with the Darwin Chinese, and it will be fully discussed in Chapter 10. It is one of the many factors which contributed to the final form of the pidgin, although such was the situation that a pidgin would have arisen whether the Chinese had been there or not.

The frontier townships

The departure of Power and his native police force did not mark the end of police activity in the pastoral frontier. It was merely the first attempt to establish a permanent police presence. Within a short space of time, police were permanently stationed at the emerging townships of the pastoral frontier, at Katherine and Borroloola in 1886 and at Roper River (Roper Bar) in 1889. As noted earlier in this chapter, these townships had grown up where the Old Coast Track crossed the major river barriers, initially for illicit grog-sellers to exploit the drovers and other travellers who passed through.

Sly-grog selling was particularly prevalent in the McArthur River district, and on the Tablelands. It came by packhorse, with the teamsters, with the hawkers, and by the normal sea route. Whatever else was lacking, there was usually plenty of grog. Men worn down by bad food and monotony were not only ready for a spree, but willing to pay for it handsomely. So, wherever men were at work, the racketeers found them. (Linklater and Tapp 1968:84)

These townships, particularly Borroloola and Roper Bar, became haunts or sanctuaries for criminals from all parts of Australia, safe across the border from Queensland and safe in any case because police were far away (Haydon 1911:270). One of the few people ever to visit these places in an official capacity was Searcy, some of whose observations have been cited earlier. Searcy recorded detailed descriptions of life at the 'Bar'.

(In 1884)

At the 'Bar' there was a store and, needless to say, at that period it was not licensed. That, however, did not stop the sale of grog. All the cattle from Queensland for the Territory used to come by way of the Roper, so one can understand with whom the trade was done.

(Searcy 1909:107)

Many a strange tale could be told of the life and doings on the back blocks, and the extraordinary characters met with at a place like Roper which was looked upon as a sanctuary for the rest of the States. Many had faces that would take the edge of a razor, smash a mirror or bust a camera. (Searcy 1909:111)

In consequence of its isolated position, with no police or telegraph station within hundreds of miles, the Bar had become an asylum for 'undesirables' of all sorts from every part of Australia and beyond.

(Searcy 1912:206-207)

(In 1886)

During that time I stopped principally at the shanty at the Bar, where there was plenty of life. A constant stream of overlanders, comprising good honest men, brumby hunters, cattle duffers, horse thieves, and non-descript outlaws, were passing through, it being the height of the Kimberley rush. (Searcy 1909:147)

Searcy's descriptions of Borroloola show that life there in that era was much the same, if not worse. The town was described in official correspondence (G.R-I.C 1886/225) as 'the resort of all the scum of Northern Australia' where those individuals 'who dare not go to Queensland and dare not go to the telegraph line' camped on the opposite side of the river, fought constantly, mistreated the Aboriginal people and stole 'anything they could lay their hands on' (Neal 1977:30).

(In 1886)

... the settlement was in a state of chaos, owing to the absence of police and for hundreds of miles round the M'Arthur the district was in a state of terror. This was no exaggeration, for the crimes committed were beyond description. All the outlaws of Queensland made for the Territory, for they had nothing to fear; in fact, this country was a sanctuary for every ruffian in Australia.

(Searcy 1909:163)

The tragic effects of these European social misfits on Aboriginal people cannot be too strongly stated. They were, of course, the least likely of any people to record or even make public their actions, but the little evidence that is

available suggests that they did incalculable harm. Among them were those, alluded to elsewhere in the chapter, who shot Aboriginal people for sport or, as in this case recorded by Searcy, for financial gain.

While we were at the 'Bar', a man expressed a wish for a Myall nigger boy. Somebody undertook to secure him one. The morning we were leaving, I saw the man who made the promise overhauling his Queensland boys' revolvers. Some time afterwards the party returned, dragging a boy of about fifteen years with them, the nigger yelling and struggling furiously. (Searcy 1909:114)

Although they were small, townships like Roper Bar and Borroloola were difficult places, in the strategic sense, for Aboriginal people to attack. There were buildings, against which spears were ineffective, and there were usually a significant number of armed men. On at least one occasion, however, Aboriginal people did amass a large body of warriors with the intention of attacking Borroloola and endeavoured by subterfuge to decoy the majority of the armed men out of the town.

One afternoon a strange nigger reported to Donegan that a big mob of salt-water niggers were spearing cattle about twenty miles away. All the men in the settlement, except two who were left in charge, immediately made tracks for the scene of the supposed slaying of cattle. It was a case of supposition, for the guide, when near the spot indicated, disappeared into the bush, and that was the last the party saw of him. They could not find any niggers or cattle. It then came home to them that they had been properly done, in a manner which evidently meant mischief to the settlement. They made back as if the devil were after them. It was a good thing they did, for close to the store were about three hundred able-bodied buck niggers all armed with spears. On the arrival of the party the blacks took to the river. The alligators no doubt had a good time. (Searcy 1909:175)

There was no way in which such strategies could finally succeed, and by the time Searcy visited Roper Bar in 1884, the Aboriginal people of the immediate vicinity had virtually been subjugated. They were required to camp on the opposite side of the river from the shanty-town and had to seek permission to cross their own river. When given permission, they were required to wear a tin plate slung around their neck. Any not wearing the permit badge were shot (Searcy 1909:113). Indeed, the only reason that the Europeans tolerated the Aboriginal presence at Roper Bar at all was so that they could indulge in the sexual exploitation of the women — a fact which was obvious to the Duracks when they passed through.

The Roper depot among thick tropical trees and creepers on the river bank had the unreal quality of a stage setting. A supply schooner was anchored among the mangroves waiting for the tide and the crew, Chinese, aboriginal and Malay, was lounging about the little timber and angle iron shanty. The skipper, in tropical topee and whites, sat fanning himself in a hammock, drinking 'square face' with the storekeeper and some

drovers from somewhere inland. A few sporting types were shooting at bottles and crocodiles, playing poker or mumble-the-peg and singing snatches of bawdy Territory songs, while black women hung about and cast sheep's eyes at the newcomers ... 'You're in the land of Black Velvet now,' one of the loungers remarked. 'Unless you go round to Darwin you'll not find a white woman in the north between Burketown and Broome.' (Durack 1959:260-261)

Durack also recorded another blatant sexual practice involving the use of Aboriginal women disguised as men whom Linklater and Tapp (1968:85) refer to as 'black concubines'. As Durack (1959:261) noted at Roper Bar, they were normally dressed in male clothes and referred to as 'boys' (Sowden 1882:42; Searcy 1909:173). It was generally admitted that the chief reason for which Aboriginal men killed European men was the abduction of Aboriginal women.

There were many murders by the niggers which ... were caused by the white men taking away the black women from their tribes. Nearly all the drovers, cattlemen, and station hands had their 'black boys' (gins) ... It is the taking away of the women that has been the cause of so many white men having been rubbed out by the niggers ... In the great out-beyond, half-caste children never live. (Searcy 1909:173)

Sowden commented forthrightly on the practice when he visited the Northern Territory as early as 1882. As he said, he did not 'mince words'. The practice was widespread and he regarded it as a 'blot on our civilization'.

At the Port Darwin Camp there was brought under notice a custom which is too much in vogue amongst people who drive cattle over from Queensland. We met one of them who had a little black, dressed in boy's clothing, travelling with him as servant. It transpired that this little fellow was really a girl, and what her life may be I know nothing of ... these feminine boys are the victims of their masters' debasing passions. That is the fact, and I do not see why the matter should be minced. There has been too much mincing of it already. Some of these thoughtless bushmen have, in the stealing of their black servants, had "brushes" with the male relatives of the latter and shot them down. The natives make reprisals, and sometimes kill guilty and at other times innocent men. The whites resident in the district then have a "revenge" party, and shoot down a score blacks or so, and call it English justice ... These blacks live and die like sheep, only that their lot is even more degraded. *And the whites degrade it.* Experienced men throughout both colonies tell you that they never knew a so-called native trouble arise but that a lubra was at the bottom of it, and the conscientious will not take part in "revenge" engagements. How long is this blot on our civilization to remain? And there is just one more suggestive query - Where do all the half-caste children go? They are born; the women remain with their English masters

after they are born. Where are the children? You can't see half-a-dozen the Northern Territory over. Why? (Sowden 1882:42-43)

The disappearance of the 'half-caste' children is yet another facet of the suspension of morality at the frontier. An elderly informant, now living in Darwin, recently told me that her mother was an Aboriginal woman from Hodgson Downs and that her father was a policeman at Roper Bar. She said that he had fathered many children, but had contrived to dispose of them. The woman herself is badly scarred because her father tried to force her mother to burn her in a fire not long after she was born. A subject considered to be indelicate, the killing of these babies is rarely mentioned. It was one of those activities which Lindsay Crawford of Victoria River Station, an admirer of Willshire's writing, alluded to as 'ordeals they perform that he has wisely left unexplained'.¹¹⁸ Willshire's schizophrenic writing reveals a strange juxtaposition of conflicting attitudes, in this instance his commendation of the use of the Aboriginal women by the pioneers as a God-given right, while at the same time utterly loathing the offspring of the union.

Men would not remain so many years in a country like this if there were no women, and perhaps the Almighty meant them for use as He has placed them wherever the pioneers go ... what I am speaking about is only natural, especially for men who are isolated away in the bush at outstations where women of all ages and sizes are running at large. (Willshire 1896:18)

... I certainly do object to the mongrel half-caste ... I hold out no gleam of hope for such a repulsive breed ... a nameless child, an intrusive creature, the bastard gift of a shameless Nature, conjecturally condemned ... why should the taxpayer be burdened with the expense of supporting such a valueless breed as half-caste aborigines (pp.4,35)

This matter may seem to have no direct bearing upon the major themes of this study. It is, however, included because in the absence of any other data, the character of the Europeans with whom the Aboriginal people had to deal is one of the factors which can help to piece together as accurate as possible an impression of the social conditions at the time.

As noted earlier, police were permanently stationed at Borroloola in 1886 and at Roper Bar in 1889. Prior to this time, police investigations involved the despatch of police from elsewhere and their work took place long after the events had occurred. It is thought-provoking that in the 20 years of permanent settlement of the Northern Territory from 1869 to 1889, which is the period covered in this and in the previous chapter, no official acknowledgement was ever made that the killing of any Aboriginal person may have been murder. The killings were countless, but they were all considered to be justified.

In 1913, Police Inspector Waters (1913:101-104) summarised what he termed 'the most serious offences committed in the Northern Territory from its inception until the end of 1911'. The list of serious offences did not include any killing of an Aboriginal person until 1889, the first mentioned being the particularly cold-blooded and premeditated murder of Manialacum by Rodney Spencer at Bowen's Straits (see description in Searcy 1912:286-290). Waters'

summary, however, listed the killing by Aborigines, up to 1889, of twenty seven Europeans and four Chinese, although it is noted that some Aboriginal suspects in some of these incidents were shot 'while resisting arrest'. It will never be possible to determine how many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Aboriginal people were killed in that era throughout the Northern Territory and in the other parts of the pastoral frontier. Of the Kimberley region of the north-west, Durack (1959:320) claims that 'no native brought to justice ... was acquitted nor was any white found guilty on a charge involving the treatment of an aboriginal'.

When the police presence eventually did become more obvious within the pastoral frontier, from 1886 onwards, their activities actually made the situation far worse for the Aboriginal people. The first duty of the mounted police was to protect the settler and his cattle and the only justice the Aboriginal people received, if justice it can be called, was the occasional insistence that punitive action was the prerogative of the police, not the settler. The only initial consequence of this, at least as far as Aboriginal people were concerned, was that reprisal was swifter.

It is, on the other hand, also true that as the years of increasing European presence slipped by, many Aboriginal people adopted a 'marginal' life-style as fringe-dwellers of the emerging townships. Some were merely resigned to it, and some were attracted by it. Like the station people, they gradually moved into a closer and more regular contact with a range of Europeans. Although true social and cultural integrity was no longer possible, there was, as well, a significant number of Aboriginal people who endeavoured to maintain what independence they could and to continue to resist the encroachment of the Europeans. These were mainly those people who lived in parts of the frontier where there was as yet no permanent European presence. Pastoralists, however, still expected to be able to graze cattle on all or any part of the frontier and they expected the police to protect their cattle no matter how distant they were.

As the short-lived gold-rush to the north gradually petered out, the Chinese became a prominent group in the frontier towns. Some found employment as cooks, gardeners and domestics. Few pastoral homesteads were without a Chinese cook and established residents of the towns also employed them. Some cases have already been mentioned in Chapter 6, including the cook at the Overland Telegraph station at Katherine, and Cheon, the cook at Elsey Station. Others found employment in a variety of different trades and they were often indispensable. Their presence was not without linguistic significance, and this point will be discussed later in this study.

One valuable source of information regarding life in the frontier towns is the police records. As has been evident elsewhere in this study, some of the most important surviving data has come from situations where official records had to be kept such as ships log books, settlement journals and explorers diaries. Police kept two kinds of record. *Police Letter Books* recorded verbatim all outgoing and incoming correspondence, while *Police Journals* recorded daily incidents of importance. Unfortunately, all the police records of the first several decades of the Roper Bar Police Station are missing. It is not suspected that there is anything mysterious or any ulterior motive in their disappearance. They were probably eaten by white ants or washed away in the floods. Fortunately, however, the *Borroloola Police Letter Books* are preserved from the establishment of the Police Station in 1886 and the *Borroloola Police Journal* from 1899. Given that the police only recorded what they wanted made

public, these books, nevertheless, give an insightful picture of life in a frontier town. The police establishment was at first one constable and one Aboriginal tracker. The station was manned in succession by Mounted Constables Donegan, Curtis and Smith between 1886 and 1888. Corporal Power came in 1889 and remained for many years. Most of their correspondence was directed to Police Inspector Foelsche. Some of the more interesting matters to which reference was made include

1. General lawlessness. Problems with both European and Aboriginal offenders.
2. The distinction between 'civilised' and 'salt-water' Aboriginal groups - i.e. the town dwellers and the still-independent coastal people.
3. The presence and importance of the Chinese.
4. Cattle spearing by Aboriginal people and cattle stealing by Europeans.
5. Efforts to obtain Aboriginal police trackers from distant places.

As these sources of information are unpublished and unavailable outside the archives in Darwin where the books are held, excerpts from them will be provided in Appendix E in detail sufficient to allow the information to be interpreted adequately.

The emerging townships of Roper Bar, Borroloola and Katherine were important sites of pidgin development and usage. After 1885, the Borroloola police records provide clear evidence of the nature of life in general and of social interaction in particular in these towns. The largest single group were the Aboriginal people. There was a considerable amount of interaction and movement between those who had chosen to settle in the vicinity of the town and those who lived away from it, but visited it sometimes. Furthermore, for many years, unlike other ethnic groups in the towns, the Aboriginal people included significant numbers of women and children.

The next most numerous group were the Europeans. In terms of permanent residence, their numbers were small, consisting only of such people as the policeman and the hotel keeper. There were always also a substantial number of transient Europeans who camped there for varying periods. As the police records amply demonstrated, the Chinese also gradually became a significant group and, as permanent residents, they may have at times outnumbered the Europeans. Chinese were sometimes in European employ, but many either worked independently as trademen or market gardeners or even as cattle entrepreneurs.

Another small but not unimportant group were the 'foreign' Aboriginal people in the employment of the Europeans, such as police trackers and stockmen accompanying drovers. There was also evidence that Aboriginal people were employed by some of the Chinese, although these were almost certainly local Aboriginal people. The name change implied in the *Borroloola Police Letter Books* on 11 July 1892 and 4 January 1893 is, in fact, a mark of close friendship (see pages 356 and 357).

There were members of other ethnic groups as well who were there from time to time. There were, for example, the crews of the ships which provisioned the towns or brought officials on various duties. The ships came mainly from Darwin and sometimes from Thursday Island, but the crews were of mixed origin. Searcy, on his visits, often had Malay crew members, while the Duracks, as they passed through Roper Bar, noted the Chinese, Aboriginal and Malay crew of a supply schooner (Durack 1959:260). The police records note one 'Kanaka' in the

area, which presumably means a Pacific Islander, a few of whom were employed in the Queensland pastoral industry (Dutton and Mühlhäusler 1984:239).

These frontier towns were socially and culturally complex places. They were places of lawlessness and places of oppression where the gun ruled and the powerful exploited the weak. They were places where morality was suspended and life was cheap. They were places characterised by isolation and impermanence. They were places which epitomised the most tragic aspects of the clash of cultures. On the other hand, they were also places where people of widely diverse cultures and languages were forced into close proximity to each other. They were places where the Europeans, the Aborigines and the Chinese were obliged because of that proximity not only to communicate with each other, but to develop verbal strategies for doing it. Like the situation of cultural and linguistic mixing already described in early Darwin, these frontier towns were a classic milieu for the development of a pidgin as a *lingua franca*.

It is important also that there was an ever increasing degree of mobility, not only among non-Aboriginal people but also among Aboriginal people themselves. Europeans moved throughout the cattle region, often bringing with them some knowledge of existing pidgins from elsewhere. Chinese miners from the northern goldfields found employment further south as station cooks or tradesmen. Aboriginal people began to work in the cattle industry, often moving temporarily away from their traditional homelands. Some Aborigines were sent to gaol in Darwin from places further south. All these movements contributed significantly to a standardising of the pidgins, a convergence of local variants into one widely understood language.

Conclusion

There were within the pastoral frontier, two major sites of pidgin development: the cattle stations and the frontier towns. By the turn of the century it is clear from the writings of Gunn (1905, 1908), Searcy (1909, 1912) and others that there was a widely understood Pidgin English throughout the region. It is also clear, as noted in the conclusion to the previous chapter, that Darwin was the other major site of pidgin development in the Northern Territory. It is furthermore evident that due partly to a general mobility of the population, these Pidgin Englishes had converged by the end of the last century into one widely-understood pidgin, best referred to as Northern Territory Pidgin English. If one compares the Pidgin English spoken in Elsie Masson's kitchen in Darwin in 1913 (Masson 1915) with that spoken in Jeannie Gunn's kitchen at Elsey Station in 1902 (Gunn 1905) or if one compares the Pidgin English spoken in the Borroloola Court House in 1902 (Spencer 1928) with that spoken in Darwin Court House in 1913 (Masson 1915), it is evident that all are examples of the same language. This convergence will be analysed in detail in the discussions in Chapters 9 and 10. All located Pidgin English examples from the Northern Territory up to 1910 are given in the Appendices. These examples will also be discussed in detail in Chapters 9 and 10. Before proceeding to the discussion, however, the next chapter, the last of the strictly social and historical chapters, examines the immediate background to the creolisation of the pidgin at Roper River.

CHAPTER 8

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO CREOLISATION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide as clearly as possible the historical background to the creolisation of the pidgin. As stated in Chapter 1, creolisation first occurred at the Roper River Mission Station shortly after 1908. It is intended that this chapter should establish that

1. Prior to the establishment of the Anglican Mission at Roper River, the Aboriginal people of the region had endured thirty years of massacre.
2. The attempted extermination of the Aboriginal people of the region was particularly intensified in the early years of this century.
3. The remnants of the many language groups of the Roper River region perceived the Mission as a refuge and gathered there for protection in 1908.
4. The missionaries implemented a pattern of life on the mission which revolved around the church and agriculture or building for the adults and, for the children, school and a dormitory system.

The defeat of Aboriginal resistance and the conspiracy of silence

The fact of massacre of Aboriginal people in large numbers in the 1870s and 1880s throughout the whole of the pastoral frontier, including the Roper River region, was demonstrated in the previous chapter. A more difficult and still controversial matter to demonstrate is that this 'war of extermination' continued for many years, most of it unrecorded, most of it shielded from public scrutiny and public knowledge by a conspiracy of silence. This section will therefore document as thoroughly as possible the events which led to that conspiracy and the evidence of the atrocities which it hid, provided by the few occasions when the silence was broken.

The large-scale abuse and killing of Aboriginal people throughout the pastoral frontier of north Queensland, the Northern Territory and the northern parts of Western Australia, did not take place completely unnoticed nor uncondemned by the wider white Australian community, but such criticism as there was came mostly from the distant south. Among the most outspoken critics were some of the leading figures of the churches. They included a Western Australian Anglican priest, Rev. J.B. Gribble, the Catholic Bishop of Perth, Bishop Gibney and the Anglican Bishops of North Queensland, Bishop George Frodsham and of Carpentaria, Bishop Gilbert White.

What Durack (1959:318) termed a 'trickle' of criticism of the atrocities committed against Aboriginal people by northern settlers continued for many years. Sowden's comments, among the earliest, have already been quoted. The trickle swelled to a flood on a number of occasions, usually as a result of the report of an atrocity or in response to action threatened by the authorities. One such threat was Alexander Forrest's proposal of an expedition of police to the north-western section of the pastoral frontier 'strong enough to resist, subdue and leave a lasting impression on the aborigines ...' (Durack 1959:318). The southern press was deluged with letters, some several columns in length describing atrocities and massacres of Aboriginal people, others in hot denial and some in open and forthright defence of these actions. When 'Onlooker', a regular commentator, argued that the debate was irrelevant because the Aboriginal people were doomed in any case, Bishop Gibney responded with vehemence.

'The aboriginal races of Australia are doomed to disappear before the advances of the white man.' So say the well-groomed armchair philosophers, talking of a matter with which they have no practical acquaintance. 'Doomed to disappear!' Blessed phrase! Over how many bloody outrages, over what an amount of greed on the part of some, weakness on the part of the Government, and apathy on the part of the public does this convenient euphemism throw a thin but decent disguise. Our blackfellows do, indeed, seem fated to disappear but not because of any inherent inability to adapt themselves to the conditions of civilisation. Nor is it solely, nor chiefly because the easily-acquired vices of the white man prove fatal to them. Their misfortune is that they stand in the way of unchecked spread of flocks and herds. Insatiable earth hunger and monstrous unscrupulousness are main factors in that process of 'removal' of which they are the victims. They disappear rapidly on the outskirts of civilisation because in such a situation the white man is practically beyond the cognisance of the law, shoots straight and shoots often ...
(Quoted in Durack, 1959:318)

Such opinions tended to be dismissed in the North as the 'howling' of 'uninformed sentimentalists' and 'mealy-mouth philanthropists'. The paranoic Willshire (1896:50) called them 'oily, soapy hypocrites in town ... canting snufflers'. To the cattle men and the increasing number of mounted police assigned to protect them, this was a frontier of white civilisation, a place which the cattle men had a moral right to invade and develop. There was an 'us or them' mentality. Young Jim Durack penned a lengthy poem addressed to all outsiders so ignorant as to suggest that Aboriginal people might have a point of view. Excerpts from it are quoted in Durack (1959:319-320). In particular he addressed it to all those town dwellers who

(Pass their days) in comfort ease and peace
Guarded by the metropolitan police.

Durack's argument was simple. His cause was just and his hatred was justified.

You who tread safe the city's beaten tracks
May well believe in kindness to the blacks
Would you still hold your dusky friend so dear

If he was dodging round you with a spear? ...
 Ah who shall judge the bushman's hasty crime
 Justified both by circumstance and crime?
 Righteous the hate with which the soul is filled
 When man must slaughter or himself be killed.

In the north, rejection of the criticism from the south was virtually unanimous, the only exceptions being a few Christian missionaries. Mounted Constable Willshire was scathing about missionaries who, in his view, harbored guilty Aboriginal criminals and provided a safe haven where they could 'concoct schemes' and organise themselves again (Willshire 1896:26). Indeed, he wished that the Aboriginal resisters would spear the missionaries and leave the pioneers alone.

I don't mind them experimenting on a hypocritical missionary,
 but they must leave practical bushmen alone, for they are
 the brave pioneers who push out to the frontier, and are
 exposed to the full force of the naked barbarians.

One obvious effect, however, of the southern outcry was that atrocities committed against Aboriginal people were simply kept secret. There had already been some degree of secrecy in the past and a wide use of generalised euphemisms such as 'adequate punishment' 'condign punishment' or 'just retribution'. One of the most frequently employed euphemisms in official and other reports was the term 'dispersal'. Everyone knew what 'dispersing the blacks' meant. The term had already come into common use to mean the massacre of Aboriginal people in Queensland and elsewhere (Loos 1982:43). Police Inspector Foelsche went so far as defining it: 'shooting them' (SAA 790/1885/174).

The conspiracy of secrecy in the Northern Territory can, in fact, be traced to one specific event and the furor which followed it, criticism which, as far as Europeans in the Northern Territory were concerned, resulted in the decision to suppress information on the killing of Aboriginal people. This event or, rather, series of events was the murder by Aboriginal people of four European miners near the Daly River in 1884 and the massacres which followed. The subsequent controversy, waged largely in the southern press, has been well documented by Markus (1974) in his valuable monograph on the oppression of Aboriginal people in that era. The consequences are so significant for an understanding of the subsequent history of the Roper River region that it is important to set out the main details in this context. As Markus (1974:12) commented, the only unusual thing about the Daly River murders and the fierce reprisals which followed was not the actual violence it revealed, but the fact that the violence became public knowledge.

On 7 September 1884, Harry Houschildt, Thomas Schollert, Johannes Noltenius and John Landers were killed by Aboriginal people at the Daly River Copper Mine (Waters 1913:101). The immediate response in the southern press was of indignation and in September and October, both in Adelaide and Darwin, editorials cried for revenge.

... It is useless to make perfunctory search for the perpetrators of outrages weeks after they have taken place, to catch two or three persons believed to be implicated, to send them to Palmerston, and have them tried and sentenced to a few years' imprisonment. The men who murder and rob travellers and settlers must be pursued forthwith,

and as soon as their complicity in the crime has been sufficiently established they should be shown no mercy. There and then the majesty of the law should be vindicated, and the rough-and ready processes of trial and conviction must be followed by the equally primitive process of executing justice upon the spot ... It is quite clear that unless the Government do something in the way of providing effective police protection in the interior of the Territory the attempt at extending settlement and developing the natural capabilities of the country must be abandoned ... (*South Australian Register*, 9 Sept. 1884:4)

... our European settlers must be allowed to till the soil, and extract the wealth from the land which they have made their home, free from the murdering raids of these savages. Backward the natives must move before the tide of civilization, or, if they will not give place peaceably and show that their natures are as dangerous as the venomous serpent, even as every man will crush a snake under his heel, so must the hand of every man be raised against a tribe of inhuman monsters, whose cowardly and murderous nature renders them unfit to live ... nothing but the most severe punishment will have any lasting effect upon them; it should follow the offence promptly, legal technicalities should be utterly dispensed with, and a sharp lesson, administered while their hands are yet red with the blood of our plucky fellow-colonists, will do more to ensure the future safety of the Europeans than all the circuitous and slow processes of punishment which would be meted out in accordance with the provisions of the law. We believe some of the right class of men are now on the tracks of the Daly River natives, but we do not expect to hear many particulars of their chase; the less the better, in such cases as the present, it is far more sensible to avoid complications by the exercise of a judicious reticence. (*Northern Territory Times*, 4 Oct. 1884)

As had been done on many previous occasions, two separate parties were sent in 'pursuit of the Daly River Murderers'. There was an official or police party under the leadership of Corporal Montagu and another private reprisal party approved by the South Australian Minister of Justice at the urging of the then Government Resident. A third unofficial party was also despatched following an incident in which a number of Aboriginal people were shot, allegedly in self-defence.

Initially, none of this seems to have reached the southern press or, more likely, the southern press, having called for revenge, may have thought it prudent not to report on the manner of its execution. As Markus (1974:12) shows, the nature and extent of the reprisals did eventually become public knowledge. This was largely due to the courage of an ex-policeman, James Smith, who had served in the Northern Territory, and Robert Morice, who had been Protector of Aborigines for the Northern Territory until he was 'got rid of for doing his duty in defence of the blacks' (SAR 23 Dec. 1885:4). Morice, wishing to 'let the public of South Australia know what is actually being done', wrote to a South Australian newspaper

While Inspector Foelsche and a police party were out securing the actual murderers, another party consisting of non-official persons, but armed and provisioned by the Government, were let loose to act as they thought best ... The men who formed this party insisted that they should be allowed to go unaccompanied by a single policeman. The Minister of Justice and Education is reported to have hesitated about giving his consent to their going, but finally yielded to the urgency of the Government Resident, who strongly pressed it. As a salve to his conscience, or to save appearances, he gave, however instructions that they were on no account to fire on the natives unless in self-defence.

What this party did has never been made public, but the officers on board the S.S. Palmerston, which was lying in the Daly River ... say that all one night they heard a constant discharge of firearms. There was good moonlight at the time. The general belief in the Territory was that they simply shot down every native they saw, women and children included. While this was going on three teamsters reported that they had been attacked by the natives at Argument Flat. The teamsters resisted, and shot five or six of them. There were three weak points in their tale. None of the teamsters were wounded; it is unusual for natives to attack in the bold way described; and, lastly, it was admitted that there were women with the natives (one of the killed was a lubra, I think). Now it is well known that natives when they mean mischief always keep their women out of the way ... The Government Resident, as soon as he heard of the affair, arranged that another non-official party should be armed and sent out to follow up the natives. They were sent out, and returned in due time, reporting that they did not fall in with any natives. Of course the party were not asked to account for the Government ammunition they took away; and a few days after some of the men were boasting over their cups that they had shot forty-seven, including women and children ... It is difficult to say how many natives have been killed for the Daly River outrage, but from all I have heard from different sources, I should say not less than 150, a great part of these women and children ... (*South Australian Register*, 4 June 1885:7)

Morice's allegations were hotly denied in the South Australian parliament. The Chief Secretary, in response to a question, stated that 'no party to make reprisals in the N.T. was ever sent out by the Government, nor did any such party ever go out' (SAPD(LA) 10 June 1885:50). He said that all that went out was a search party to find the body of Houschildt and that the Government assisted the search party with rations (including ammunition) only on their promise never to 'fire on the blacks, unless absolutely required to do so in self-defence'. There the matter may have rested were it not for the fact that Corporal Montagu wrote an official report which admitted too much and that the existence of the report became known, obliging the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory to table it in Parliament on 17 November 1885, thus placing it in the public domain.

... found a native camp on a lagoon. The moment they saw us they commenced running into a scrub ... As they did not stop when called on, they were fired on, but with what results is not known ... while on the Mary Plains we destroyed a native camp, implements and spears, but did not see the occupants ... came upon a camp of natives on the eastside of the McKinlay. The women and children ran away, but the men, taking their spears and woomeras, retreated to the water ... none of those who took to the water are known to have got away. It is supposed that there were between twenty and thirty men in the camp ... What the other parties have done I do not know, but I believe the natives have received such a lesson this time as will exercise a salutary effect over the survivors in the time to come. One result of this expedition has been to convince me of the superiority of the Martini-Henry rifle, both for accuracy of aim and quickness of action.
(SAPP[HA] 170/1885:3)

The immediate consequence of the public awareness of the contents of the Montagu report was an about-face by the *South Australian Register*. It was now evident that the public had been misled by the official dismissal of Morice's allegations. The newspaper now cried for justice. We civilise them, said the paper 'with the Martini-Henry rifle'.

We show them the heinousness of murder by wholesale slaughter which confounds the innocent with the guilty. They commit murder — let us see how they like being murdered. That is our argument ... We have no hesitation in saying that the cold-blooded manner in which Corporal Montagu and his associates murdered these unhappy wretches is a disgrace to him, a disgrace to the community, and an outrage on the civilization about which we boast. The story of the expedition reads like an extract from the history of the Spanish conquest of Mexico ... (Montagu's) was a butchering expedition and the unfortunate victims were mere targets. They have been taught the value of civilization. It is civilization which has despoiled them of their territory, which has deprived them of their freedom ... (*South Australian Register*, 14 Nov. 1885:4)

Numerous letters to the *Register* and other newspapers echoed the editorial stance, urging the public to demand an inquiry and insisting that those who perpetrated 'the atrocious massacres', including the police officers, be tried and punished. The Aborigines' Friends Association publicly entered the arena and organised a deputation to the Minister of Justice. Ex-Northern Territory policeman, James Smith, could contain himself no longer. He had been in the police barracks when Montagu's party finally returned and he had listened to their boastful private accounts of their success. In particular, he detailed the massacre at the waterhole to which Montagu referred in his official report

Upon another occasion the police came upon a large party of natives who took refuge in a waterhole. The police at once surrounded it, Corporal Montagu going on one side with the horses, and they commenced carefully firing upon the natives, who were all killed but one ... One of my informants, who

prided himself on his shooting, much lamented having missed one old man, who ducked in the water as the trigger was pulled, and the trooper was only partially consoled by shooting him dead as he came up again ... I said to one of my informants 'I hope for your sake the police will be able to justify their conduct, but I think you have all been guilty of murder'. His answer was - 'It is all right; we only acted under orders'. He told me what the orders were. They were to call upon the natives thrice in the Queen's name to surrender, and if they did not surrender, to shoot them. These orders came from Inspector Foelsche ... Out of five constables whom I know to have been engaged ... MacDonald ... was regarded as about the worst shot, and he cut fourteen notches on the butt of his carbine, being the tally of those whom he knew he had himself killed ...
(*South Australian Register*, 28 Nov. 1885:6)

When the Northern Territory Government Resident himself responded to the clamour for justice by deprecating the introduction of 'mealy-mouthed philanthropies' into the question of frontier justice, the *Register* was outraged.

Is Killing Not Murder? ...

Philanthropy is not mealy mouthed which raises its voice against wholesale murders ... the perpetrators ought not to be allowed to escape. The perpetrators are not only those who shot down the wretched blacks, but the officials who authorized and concealed the disgraceful deed.

(*South Australian Register*, 8 Dec. 1885:4)

Darwin newspapers responded with vehemence. 'Corporal Montagu ... and his party are ... entitled to the hearty thanks of the whole community' said the *Northern Territory Times* (26 Dec. 1885), rather than 'howls of indignation' from 'southern chicken-hearted' people. 'As to the shooting of blacks' said the *North Australian* (8 Jan. 1886) 'we uphold it defiantly'. At the peak of the controversy, the *Northern Territory Times* republished letters and other comment from the southern press in order to expose them to editorial ridicule.

Finally, an enquiry to be held in Darwin was ordered by the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory. Today, the public would find the members of the Board of Enquiry totally unacceptable but despite criticism of the membership of the board by the *South Australian Register* (23 Dec. 1885:4) the enquiry went ahead. Its chairman, Baines, had been a member of one of the private punitive parties and other members included a relative of Inspector Foelsche, a friend of the Government Resident, and the new Protector of Aborigines who had been appointed to replace Morice, who had done his job too well. The *Register* labelled the enquiry a sham. It met behind closed doors where they discovered in their secret interviews and deliberations that Montagu's report was 'incorrect and misleading', and that 'the natives were treated with leniency'. They also discovered, behind the same doors, that those Aboriginal people who took to the water near the Mary River actually escaped and that Montagu had mistakenly presumed that he and his party had shot them all. There was, they said 'no evidence to prove that any natives were killed'. (The report was published in the *South Australian Register*, 18 Jan. 1886:7)

The tragic consequences for Aboriginal people of this whitewashing of their killers by a sham enquiry are beyond measure. The police and the settlers in general now had a clear demonstration that they could slaughter Aboriginal people with total impunity. The Government Resident, the highest official in the Northern Territory, had publicly defended the killers. An official enquiry had found what everyone knew to have happened, not to have happened at all. The public and the media in the Northern Territory regarded those who set out to massacre Aboriginal people as heroes. In the Northern Territory, after 1885-1886, there was an open licence to kill Aboriginal people.

It is absurd to expect anything like a fair, manly, or dispassionate view of the question from any South Australian newspapers ... If a hundred of the offending tribe had bitten the dust for each one of the poor fellows who were so brutally attacked, we at least would consider that no more than simple justice had been done ... Our settlers in the Territory will doubtless take good care to deal with the natives, when they again offend, without the intervention of the police or the Government. We trust that when occasion again arises there will be no necessity to argue about the tally of killed or wounded; private parties will be sent out and the natives will probably disperse, beyond that statement the Southern Press will have little to fill its sensational columns with.

(Northern Territory Times, 20 Feb. 1886)

Not only was morality suspended at the frontier, so now, was the law. Not only did the settlers feel free to kill with impunity, but it appears certain that Inspector Foelsche no longer required his police to furnish written reports of any actions against Aboriginal people. It was safer to say nothing. Foelsche had, in fact, long before gone on record as saying that the only way to subdue the Aboriginal people was to 'inflict severe chastisement on them if the government will legalise it' (SAA 79/1881:326). Thus the 'administrative method' of dealing with Aborigines, widespread in other states, also became the practice in the Northern Territory. What was involved was not merely the killing of Aborigines by settlers but the killing by police, known to their superiors but condoned.¹¹⁹

The extent of the killing of Aboriginal people in the years to follow was hidden behind the smokescreen of a conspiracy of silence. This is the sinister reason why Merlan (1978), as discussed in Chapter 7, failed to find any official written record of the activities of Corporal Power and the Native Police in Elsey and the Roper River region in 1885-1886. It is my view that official reports, if made at all, would have been general and vague; the absence of detail, indeed even of any reports at all, in this context, is more suggestive than their presence.

A detailed set of Aboriginal recollections from a number of localities in the Northern Territory has been gathered by Jay and Peter Read (1980), but this material is as yet unpublished. Although secrecy shrouds much of what occurred in the years which followed the Daly River murders, Aboriginal stories of events in that era provide interesting insights into what actually did happen. This is particularly so when such oral accounts can be put together with the few surviving written materials. One of the rare written sources for the era between 1886 and 1900 is Mounted Constable Willshire's personal recollections (1986). These largely concern the Victoria River region, which, as a police

district, adjoined the Roper River region. Not even Willshire was willing to provide details of all that he did but there is sufficient information to indicate that the era was characterised by brutality and slaughter. As J. and P. Read (1980) demonstrate, Aboriginal oral accounts of events show it to have been even more atrocious than Willshire admits.

One example is the reprisals which followed the alleged attack on Mulligan and Ligar in 1895. Waters (1913) gives the abbreviated official account

May, 1895 — John Mulligan and George Ligar, teamsters, were attacked by natives at T.K. Camp, Jasper Creek, Victoria River, and dangerously wounded; Mulligan having the muscles of one leg divided, and Ligar speared through the face and nose. They sustained a siege for two days behind their waggons and stacks of flour, and eventually escaped on horses without saddles or bridles ... One native was arrested and found not guilty.

According to the *Northern Territory Times*, this was 'another of those native outrages'. The possibility that Aboriginal people could have been provoked was just not entertained. The view of the newspaper was that 'renegade Queensland boys', the teamsters' Aboriginal employees, had betrayed them to the local Aboriginal people and had leagued with the locals in the attack. Old Mick Kaningun told the Reads a different version of the story. The reason for the attack, he said, was that Mulligan and Ligar had abducted two Aboriginal women and were forcibly retaining them. (J. and P. Read 1978:119). It is no longer possible to ascertain whether or not other Europeans in the region knew that the teamsters had abducted women. It is, in any case, unlikely that it would have made any difference to them. As has been shown in Chapter 7, not only was the taking of women widely accepted as one of the rewards of the white man's endurance and isolation, but some people, like the famous pioneer Alfred Giles, had already publicly stated that Aborigines were so deficient in any kind of moral code that it was impossible to affront them. The idea, said Giles, of the 'existence of chastity among their women ... is preposterous ... Not less preposterous is the idea of the black woman being outraged'. (*Northern Territory Times*, 6 March 1886:3)

The attack on Mulligan and Ligar was avenged both privately and by the police many times over. None of the reprisals are acknowledged officially but unlike the majority of the atrocities committed against Aboriginal people, some admissions have been made in later reminiscences. Buchanen and his droving party happened to be in the Victoria River region at the time.

Though this expedition was ill equipped for such rough country both in plant and personnel, it was fortunate after a long search and by patient tracking to surprise at last a large camp of the enemy and inflict adequate punishment. (Buchanen 1934:115)

Another person in the region at the time was the notorious Willshire, in charge of the Gordon Creek police station. Willshire sang the praises of one Jim Ledgerwood, who single-handedly confronted three Aboriginal men alleged to have been involved in the attack on Mulligan and Ligar.

Jim Ledgerwood distinguished himself when confronted with the repulsive blackfellows who attempted to murder John Mulligan and George Ligar. Ledgerwood did not recoil from

them. They could speak English like ourselves, and cursed him, and stood their ground for a short time; but, with undaunted intrepidity he shot one dead, and made the other surrender. (Willshire 1896:89)

Willshire was not far away at the time of the initial attack. According to his reminiscences, he came upon the wagons three days after the 'siege' commenced and just a short time after Mulligan and Ligar had made their escape. Among other things, Willshire mentioned a party of at least twelve white men and over twenty horses who pursued the Aboriginal attackers. The only indication he gave of the outcome of the pursuit was that they 'recovered some of the stolen property' (Willshire 1896:75). Willshire was sarcastic about the efforts of one of the party, Jack Watson, against whom Willshire had obviously some personal animosity.

This party went out for two days on the blacks' tracks, and recovered some of the stolen property. One of the party under Mr. Ledgerwood, by the name of Jack Watson, made a most brilliant capture of three gravy-eyed old gins, and went to the trouble of walking them in to where the wagons were. Watson broke the peaceful spirit of silence by giving the poor, helpless, emaciated creatures into legal custody in a loud, blustering, vehement voice, to let everyone know that he had seized them when in possession of about 2 lbs. of flour; had held them in bondage, and marched their wasted forms to Ledgerwood's ration depot. It was here the immaculate Jack Watson, armed only with his spotless purity, called upon one of South Australia's mounted constables to take them in charge. One poor human tool had her arm broken, and another was covered with weals and stripe-like marks, extending round her sides. The third one's breasts were painfully swollen, whilst the milk from them leaked down all over her limbs. She presumably had a child somewhere; but what became of it?

Willshire has little to say of his own activities with respect to the Aboriginal people of the area. According to the Aboriginal version of the story, even the boastful Willshire had good reason to keep his actions secret. Recently, Little Mick Inginma of Yarralin took Peter Read to the site of the old Gordon Creek Police Station. There, some weeks after the attack, Willshire had sent two girls of the Bilignara group who were working for him, to find their kinsfolk and to bribe them to come to the police station. Little Mick Inginma told the Reads what happened after the Bilignara people arrived at the police station (J. and P. Read 1980:127).

Well they bin puttem chain now longa neck. Linem up ...

"You altogether run that way now. Line up," ...

Makem ready

'Now, go on'

Kickem in the rib, one of them.

'All start. Right! Line up!'

Tu! Tu! Tu! Tu! Tu! Tu! Tu!

Finish

They bin gatherem up all that now ... Takem down to that creek ... Puttem heap there. Chuckem big mob of wood ... everyting, dog and all. They burnem now ... And chuckem kerosene, strike some matches and burnem. Lot. No anything left, eh? All ashes. Burnem finish. Lot.

Little Mick Inginma went on to explain that the whites, after massacres, always burned the bodies in a creek bed. Next wet season, the waters would destroy all incriminating evidence (J. and P. Read 1980:127).

The *Gordon Creek Police Journal* records Willshire's discovery of the looted wagons on 23 May 1895 and the departure of 'Watson and a big party of men and blackboys' in pursuit of the Aboriginal attackers on 28 May. On the subject of the return of that party or of the outcome of their pursuit, the journal is silent. It is also silent on the matter of Buchanan's reprisals and the killing by Ledgerwood. There is no hint of Little Mick Inginma's story of the killing of the Bilignara people. The official record does not even tally with Willshire's own reminiscences. Hidden by such silence, very few of the details of the many killings of Aboriginal people can be pieced together today. Shielded from the real facts, the general public, particularly outside the Northern Territory, was generally unaware of what was actually happening, or when it was reported at all, it was done in vague generalisations.

During the short time I was in the far north Mr Wiltshire (sic) and his native police were called to stations hundreds of miles apart ... This officer's duties are most onerous, and I believe are discharged by him in a manner most creditable to himself and certainly with much advantage to the district; indeed, but for the awe inspired by his force it is more than probably that the sable sons of nature would frequently assert their claims not only to the country, but "all that in there is" ... (Newland 1887:32)

Thus were the Aboriginal people of the frontier decimated and thus was their resistance to the invasion of their lands put down. In a study concerned with the effect of invasion and subjugation on language, one could find no words more apt than those of Mounted Constable Willshire himself (1896:41).

It's no use mincing matters - the Martini-Henry carbines at this critical moment were talking English in the silent majesty of those great eternal rocks.

The Roper River region - the final attempt at extermination

The Aboriginal people of the Roper River region, as noted already, had gained themselves a reputation for fierce and concerted resistance to the European invasion and settlement of their lands (e.g. Newland 1887:31-32; Willshire 1896:7; Waters 1913:102). In fact, it could be argued that they had achieved

some temporary successes. Some of the earlier leases in the region proved difficult to stock. What is more to the point, the largest leases which were in fact stocked, such as Costello's Valley of the Springs Station and Macartney's Florida Station, were abandoned in the early 1890s. As shown in Chapter 7, the Aboriginal resistance was blamed for the failure. There were some parts of the region which were never leased at all, one example being the region set aside for the proposed Urapunga township. From the point of view of the Aboriginal people, there was no difference between land which was leased and not stocked or land which was never leased. The consequences of the existence of large tracts of unleased, unstocked or abandoned land was that the Aboriginal people of the Roper River region generally had somewhere to go which, if not completely safe from molestation, was at least not permanently patrolled by armed Europeans.

The Roper Bar township was always there as an outpost from which they were frequently attacked, and by 1889 there was permanent police presence in the region. There is no doubt that many Aboriginal people were indiscriminately shot during those years and what evidence there is has been presented in the previous chapter. There were also rugged areas, particularly to the north and, even more importantly, swampy areas to the east along the coast, which were, generally speaking less accessible to Europeans. In these areas, mostly free from attack, many of the various groups of Aboriginal people were at least temporarily preserved. They were the 'saltwater blacks' who were most feared by the Europeans.

In 1903, however, any hypothetical chance that there may have been for the preservation of Aboriginal cultural integrity was drastically ended. In the four years from 1899 to 1903, the London-based Eastern and African Cold Storage Company had been acquiring massive tracts of unleased and abandoned land (Bauer 1964:157) with the intention of carving out a pastoral empire from the Roper River north into Arnhem Land. The major focus of this project was nearly 60,000 square kilometres of land around the Goyder River and Blue Mud Bay (Bern 1974:79), virtually the whole eastern half of the region. In 1903, they then purchased the major stocked and viable cattle stations along the western Roper River, that is, Elsey and Hodgson Downs Stations as well as Wollgorang Station to the south (Bauer 1964:157).

The Eastern and African Cold Storage Company had no intention of allowing Aboriginal resistance to hinder their huge project. They determined therefore to exterminate them.

It is commonly said that the blacks 'hunted the cattle out'. This was probably one of the few authenticated instances in which aborigines were systematically hunted. (Bauer 1964:157)

The company employed gangs of ten to fourteen men to hunt out all Aboriginal inhabitants of the region and shoot them on sight. One of the leaders of these gangs was George Conway, who was still alive in 1957 when Bauer interviewed him in Mataranka.¹²⁰ Merlan had access to Bauer's notes when she wrote about his activities.

When interviewed in 1957 George Conway mentioned that he had been hired to lead a hunting expedition into Arnhem Land in 1905 or 1906, and that his party had killed dozens of Aborigines. There are numerous references in the *Northern Territory Times* to the company's cattle-droving to the

Arafura country, and of the 'outrages' perpetrated by the Aborigines whose lands were being occupied. It is likely that killings were carried out on the largest scale on the north Roper and in Arnhem Land, but much violence also occurred in the Elsey-Hodgson Downs area. Sorties were made in the Elsey area to exterminate the 'wild blacks' camped at the headwaters of the Roper (near the present Mataranka) and north-east along the river. The oldest Aborigines living at Jembere today were small children during the Eastern and African period but some claim to have heard contemporary or nearly-contemporary stories of the shootings. (Merlan 1978:87)

This latter point is important. There are few, if any, Aboriginal people left who were alive at that time, that is, in the early years of this century, but, on the other hand, there are many people whose close relatives were killed. These people know that not long before they were born, they lost grandparents or older brothers or uncles or aunts. Most, almost certainly all, of the Europeans with whom the Aboriginal people of the Roper River region now interact are recent arrivals without any family connections with the region's past, whereas to the Aboriginal inhabitants it is the place where their ancestors lived and the place where, at the hands of the Europeans, many of them died.

Barnabas Roberts was a child during the era of the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company's hunting gangs. He told some of his recollections to Sutton and Hercus (in Reynolds 1981:129). His family was among those who sought refuge in the high country.

Oh terrible days we used to had: we never walked around much 'mongst the plain country or groun'. We use to upla hill alla time to save our life. Our old people you know used to take us away from plain or river or billabong. Only night time they used to run down to get the lily, alla young men you know. Can't go daytime, frighten for white people. (Barnabas Roberts in Reynolds 1981:129-130)

The next generation, children born in the early years of the mission, know well the stories their parents told them. Dinah Garadji is an elderly woman of the Warndarang group, who lives at Ngukurr on the Roper River. On various occasions over the past few years, Dinah Garadji and her friends have told me what they knew of conditions in the region in the first few years of this century — an era which they readily identify as the period immediately prior to the establishment of the Anglican Mission in 1908.

Dinah Garadji's people, in those years, lived in fear of 'the white man'. While Barnabas Roberts' family took refuge in the hills, they stayed as close to the coastal mangrove swamps and jungle thickets as possible. They were relatively safe there during the wet season, hidden by the tall monsoonal grass and protected by swampy regions which the white hunters' horses could not cross. They were in more danger in the dry season when the grass cover disappeared and the plains dried out sufficiently to enable the armed horsemen to negotiate them.

In the dry season, therefore, the people felt the most exposed. They foraged mostly in the mangroves and stayed as close to cover as they could. As the dry season progressed they had to venture out onto the plains to hunt small

game and to dig for the roots and bulbs of the wet-season annual plants which were a staple food item in the dry.

They all used to hide their children. They hid them underneath the vines in the creek. Everybody used to hide there. The adults went out from time to time to search for food but they were all afraid of the white men. My mother told me what happened once when all the old women were digging for nuts at Mangkatjarra. I'm sure you know about those nuts — they're good food. Well, they were digging and digging and not keeping watch when suddenly they became aware of a big mob of white men. They were really terrified. One old woman — my grandfather's relation — was too old to run. She showed them the nuts and ate one of them. 'Its good food' she said. She spoke Warndarang because she was too old to know any Pidgin. 'It's good food,' she told them but they did not understand. A white man shot her there. They just regarded us Aboriginal people as animals. (Dinah Garadji 20 November 1983)¹²¹

In order to exterminate a whole family or more, the killers resorted to subterfuges to trap the unsuspecting group. J. and P. Read (1980:41-45) recorded an account of a massacre near the present Hodgson Downs Station. The informants were Chicken Gonagun and Sandy Mambookyi. A gang of white men tricked an Aboriginal man into convincing a large number of Alawa men that they would be paid, perhaps in tobacco or flour, for chopping firewood. While they were engaged in heaping it together, white men on horses surrounded and hemmed them in. The white men opened fire. Almost all the Alawa men were killed, but in the confusion a horse was shot through the nose. As it reared up, three Alawa men managed to break away. One was shot as he ran, but the other two eventually escaped so that through them and their descendants, the details of the massacre survived. The two men who told the story to Peter Read were asked what happened to women and children.

'Yes. Hittem, Killem. Yeah, same way they killem killem longa stick. Gottem stick, knockem in the head or neck. Them kid, piccaninny, small one, like a goanna, hittem longa tree. Bashem longa stone, chuckem longa stone, or killem. Might be too cruel. Just bashem. You know, too small to shootem, too small. Women bin run-away, they roundem up, shootem.' (J. and P. Read 1980:45)

One of the few people to record any observations at all about the region during these years was Alfred Giles in 1906,¹²² who had been commissioned to survey and report on the pastoral potential of the district. His party spent many weeks in the area. Although the Aboriginal people were generally wary, they also made contact with Giles' party when they had observed them long enough to believe they were no threat to them. On one occasion, Giles was visited by two men:

... they could speak pidgeon English and were anxious to know what we came for ... The elder one said his name was 'Bob' and he made a most emphatic stamp on the ground with his foot and exclaimed "My country". (Giles 1906:38)

This was almost certainly either 'Bob' or his father 'Old Bob' who had both been successive Roper River pilots — that is, they were employed to board ships negotiating the difficult Roper River. This practice had commenced during the Overland Telegraph era in the early 1870s, and had continued after that time. Ships still came up the Roper River for various purposes such as the bringing of supplies to the police station and the store at Roper Bar or to the cattle stations south of the Roper. According to the older people at Ngukurr, ore was sometimes shipped out, brought to the Roper landing from as far away as Pine Creek by Chinese labourers, mostly on foot but sometimes in wagons. The piloting system can be inferred from the description of White's visit in 1906 (see White 1918:153). The police at Roper Bar could be informed well in advance of the likely arrival of a ship and could arrange for that vessel to be met by the pilot at the mouth. Alternately, the pilot and his family actually camped near the mouth and could meet any unexpected ship needing assistance. The job of pilot remained in the one family and by 1906 'Old Bob' had retired and the role assumed by his son 'Bob'.

Giles also encountered a large group of Aboriginal people who had met for ceremony. At first they ensured that the river was between themselves and Giles' party, but when they realised they were not going to be molested, some swam the river. They could 'speak English very well' (Giles 1906:57) and Giles ascertained that many of them had travelled hundreds of miles to take part in an important ceremony. Giles was always able to communicate in Pidgin English (1906:88, 95). After a while the message spread around that Giles' party was not a shooting expedition. On one occasion they surprised a group of people who fled in terror leaving their scant possessions behind. Recognising Giles, they later returned.

One calling himself Dick spoke good English — I asked him why they ran away? as I did not like to see blackfellows run away. He said he did not know who we might be — that sometimes good fellow whitefellow walk about and sometime bad fellow. If he had known it was our party he would have come straight up, he had heard of me before from blacks and said "Me sabee you, you Mr Giles long time boss longa Springvale" he said he had been big fellow frightened a week or two ago by men rounding them up with rifles 'him close up been shootem me, me bin thinkit might be him come back more shootem'. (Giles 1906:95-96)

There was, it is clear, a degree of protection for those Aboriginal people who chose to associate with the whites or who had no other choice. Some, like 'Bob' may even have hoped to be able to have some control over incursion into their lands. It was a vain hope.

It is clear that from the time of the Overland Telegraph construction in 1872 to the turn of the century, the people of the Roper River region, together with the people of the whole pastoral frontier, suffered greatly at the hands of the invading Europeans. It is also clear that along the Roper the aggression was greatly intensified during the early years of this century. With the police and other authorities turning a blind eye, the hunting gangs of the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company staged an unprecedented, systematic campaign of extermination against the Roper River people. They almost succeeded.

Linguistic and social affiliation in the Roper River region

The speech community of the area which is loosely termed, for the purposes of this study, the Roper River region, is not easy to define. The concept of the 'interlocking speech communities' of Aboriginal Australia and, in particular, of northern Australia, was outlined in Chapter 4. The Roper River region is a typical but particularly complex example, a region where there was, and still is, great language diversity. The geographical region which consists of the whole length of the Roper River itself together with its catchment area is the homeland of groups speaking approximately twenty five different indigenous Aboriginal languages. Most of these languages are highly divergent from each other (Heath 1981:4).

The area of most interest to this discussion is the central and eastern sectors because it was from those parts of the region that Aboriginal people in 1908 came to the Roper River Mission where the creolisation of Pidgin English first took place. The best approach to understanding the speech community prior to 1908 is to survey briefly the traditional linguistic and social affiliations which now exist at Ngukurr.

Most of the people at Ngukurr today consider themselves to belong to one of nine separate language groups.¹²³ These people are divided into seven major social groups, locally designated by seven of the language names. Although acknowledging the controversy which surrounds the use of the term 'tribe', that word will, for want of a better term, be used to refer to these social groups in the following discussion.¹²⁴ The term has been chosen as it is in use at Ngukurr. When speaking Kriol or when speaking English, Aboriginal people refer to their social grouping as their 'tribe' and to the traditional lands associated with that group as their 'country'. These nine languages and the traditional 'countries' associated with each are indicated on Map 8.

Surrounding Ngukurr to the south and on the coast to the east are the countries of the Mara, Alawa and Warndarang tribes. The languages of these three tribes are related and constitute the Maran Family. They are prefixing languages, characterised by extensive use of auxiliary verbs (Wurm 1972:117-118). There are very few fluent speakers of Mara today and perhaps none of Warndarang (Oates and Oates 1970:16; Black 1983:20, 23). At Ngukurr, Mara and Warndarang are generally considered to be one tribe, Mara. There are small numbers of Alawa speakers on various cattle stations in Alawa country. It may be the only language of the three in some regular use (Sharpe 1972:1; Merlan 1978:73; Heath 1981:7; Black 1983:16).¹²⁵

To the west of Ngukurr is Mangarayi country. Some of the Mangarayi people were those who early identified with Elsey station and many still live in that area. The Mangarayi language is the only member of the Mangaraian Family. It is a two gender classifying language (Wurm 1972:118). Mangarayi is not in regular use at Ngukurr, although older people in the Elsey region still speak it (Oates and Oates 1970:17).

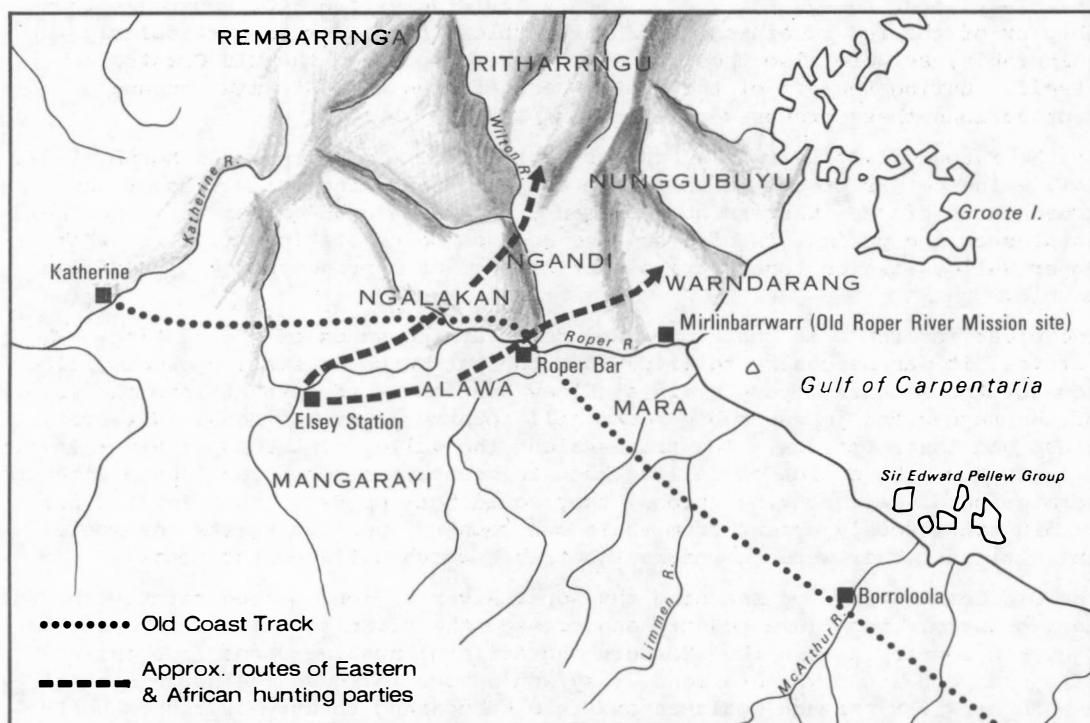
To the north-west of Ngukurr are the languages of the Gunwingguan Family. Two of the constituent languages of this family, Ngalakan and Ngandi, are considered major tribes at Ngukurr. The languages are multiple-classifying prefixing languages (Wurm 1972:115). There are very few remaining speakers of either Ngalakan or Ngandi¹²⁶ (Oates and Oates 1970:12; Heath 1978:3). Another member of the Gunwingguan Family, Rembarrnga, is also present at Ngukurr. Not considered a major tribe, Rembarrnga people are normally grouped with the

Ngalakan tribe. Rembarrnga is a non-classifying prefixing language (Wurm 1972: 115-116). There are over two hundred speakers of Rembarrnga but few of them actually reside at Ngukurr, most living at Beswick Station and Bulman (McKay 1975:1).

On the coast to the north-east of Ngukurr is the Nunggubuyu language, the only member of the Nunggubuyan Family. The major features of the language are a highly-developed system of multiple classification and a complex verb structure (Hughes 1971:1). There are approximately three to four hundred speakers of Nunggubuyu (Oates and Oates 1970:15; Black 1983:21). Most of those who regularly use the language reside at Numbulwar.

Far to the north of Ngukurr is the Yolngu Subgroup of the far-flung Pama-Nyungan Family of languages. They are suffixing languages and are only distantly related to all the other prefixing languages of Ngukurr. The southernmost member of the Yolngu Subgroup, the Ritharrngu language, is represented at Ngukurr today and its speakers are considered one of the seven major tribes. There are over three hundred speakers of Ritharrngu, although many of them reside outside Ngukurr (Heath 1980a:3). The Ritharrngu people are a more recent arrival at Ngukurr, their residence there dating only from the 1940s. Ritharrngu is probably the only traditional Aboriginal language in regular use at Ngukurr today.

The situation as it is today is summarised in Table 7 (page 232).



Map 8: Traditional 'countries' of the Roper River region and the paths of European invasion.

Table 7: Traditional language situation at Ngukurr – summary				
LANGUAGE	TRIBAL AFFILIATION	IN REGULAR USE AT NGUKURR	IN REGULAR USE ELSEWHERE	REMAINING FLUENT SPEAKERS
Alawa	Alawa	No	a little	30
Mara	Mara	No	a little	30
Warndarang		No	No	None (?)
Ngandi		No	very little	5 (?)
Ngalakan	Ngalakan	No	a little	25
Rembarrnga		No	Yes	200
Nunggubuyu		No	Yes	400
Mangarayi	Mangarayi	No	Yes	50
Ritharrngu	Ritharrngu	Yes	Yes	300

The long years of massacre by Europeans were an era of near extermination for some of these tribes, and some of them were more drastically reduced than others. It will be argued in Chapter 11 that there is a direct relationship between language loss, as shown by the above figures, and the proportion of the speakers massacred. Some of the groups were more at risk than others. Obviously, over the years, groups within striking distance of Roper Bar township or of the few remaining permanent cattle stations, were particularly vulnerable, as were also those whose countries bordered the Old Coast Track itself. During the era of the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company's depredations these groups were even more at risk.

At the *Yutpundji-Djindiwirritj* (Roper Bar) Land Claim (Morphy and Morphy 1981: 14), evidence was presented that as a consequence of the activities of the armed gangs of the 'Eastern and African', those Ngalakan groups that once held estates on the perimeters of Elsey and Hodgson Downs stations (i.e. in what is Roper Valley Station today) are either extinct or represented by a handful of people.

The clear inference is that to escape death at the hands of the hunting parties, it was necessary to live under the patronage of station owners, like some of the Mangarayi people did at Elsey Station or to retreat into the safety of the rugged and impenetrable rocky hill country of Arnhem Land. Not every group had these options. The tribes along the valley of the Roper River itself did not have the option of falling back to mountain strongholds. Even with the permission of neighbouring tribes, they could not impose on them forever nor remain continuously absent from their own country, neglecting its ceremonial obligations. They were therefore the tribes which suffered the most.

The Old Coast Track, on reaching the Roper River region, passed firstly through Mara country, then Alawa country and crossed the river at Roper Bar to enter Ngalakan country. When the 'Eastern and African' hunting gangs rode out of Elsey and Hodgson Downs Stations, they would have followed the north bank of the Roper River through Ngalakan and into Warndarang country or turned north into Ngandi country. These routes are marked on Map 8 (page 231).

So it was that these were the tribes whose numbers were most drastically and tragically depleted. They became a hunted and dispossessed people with nowhere to go.

The coming of the Christian Mission

The particular plight of the Aboriginal people of this part of the Northern Territory did not remain completely unnoticed. As Rowley (1972:288) has pointed out, agencies of government were generally 'unofficially' aware of the large-scale killing of Aboriginal people in the northern parts of Australia, and they either condoned it or at least gave it tacit approval by ignoring it. In the Northern Territory itself, there was, as detailed earlier in this chapter, a conspiracy of silence. The police did not ask the settlers what they did, and they were themselves often the perpetrators of atrocities. Similarly, the northern press was part of the conspiracy, adopting the view that the less they knew about it all, the better and, even if they did know, it was not to be published.

The governments and their various agencies were less successful at silencing the voice of the Christian churches. At the Anglican Australian Church Congress in Melbourne in 1906, George Frodsham, Bishop of North Queensland was most outspoken (Cole 1968:5).

A previous speaker at this Congress has said that the "British were put by God into Australia to preach the Gospel to the heathen". I have never heard a more complete condemnation of the stewardship of the Australian people. We have developed the country, and we have civilised it, but we have certainly done very little to preach the Gospel to the people we have dispossessed. The blacks have been shot and poisoned while they were wild and dangerous. They are now left to kill themselves with white vices where they have been 'tamed' ... but very few have received at our hands either justice or consideration.¹²⁷

As far as the Anglican Church was concerned, the Northern Territory was at that time part of the Diocese of Carpentaria and so Bishop Gilbert White of Carpentaria personally invited the Church Mission Association of Victoria¹²⁸ to establish a mission somewhere on the Arnhem Land coast (Cole 1971:176). A party led by Bishop White travelled from Thursday Island by the lugger *Francis Pritt* to explore the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Near the mouth of the Roper River, White and his party met 'Bob' the pilot and his father, 'Old Bob', the retired pilot, and visited their camp. White found he could communicate reasonably with 'Old Bob', who wanted to know if they were bringing 'tucker' for the police or for Hodgson Downs Station or whether they were seeking the 'copper stone'. White also met on the Roper, McCauley, the policeman from Roper Bar, and the manager of Hodgson Downs, together with his young son who 'speaks chiefly blackfellow language' — that is, Pidgin English (White 1918:153).

They surveyed the Roper River and chose a site 110 kilometres upstream from the mouth, at a place known to the local Aborigines as Mirlinbarrwarr.¹²⁹ On their return, they reported favourably on the site they had selected. The Victorian

Association determined to establish a mission for which the South Australian Government agreed to grant land and some financial assistance.

The Government of South Australia granted a lease of 200 square miles with a frontage of ten miles on the Roper River and extending twenty miles to the north, and promised financial aid for the new project. From the outset it was agreed that the mission should be industrial and agricultural as well as educational and spiritual, and accordingly three men were sought who would fill the varying demands of the new mission. These were found in the persons of the Rev. F.L.G. Huthnance who was the leader of the group, Mr. (later the Rev.) R.D. Joynt and Mr. C. Sharp (a stockman) ... (Cole 1968:5)

On their way to Roper River, via North Queensland, the founding party called at the Anglican Mission at Yarrabah. Three Aboriginal Christians from Yarrabah agreed to join the team. These were James Noble, Angelina Noble and Horace Reid (Gribble 1933:108). The party, now six in number, set out on the *Francis Pritt* from Thursday Island on 8 August 1908, arriving at the chosen site on the Roper River on 27 August 1908 (Cole 1968:5).

From the moment of the first missionaries' arrival, they were welcomed by the Aboriginal people of the immediate vicinity. In particular, they were encouraged by the acceptance and active support of Gajiyuma or 'Old Bob', the former pilot. He was also an old and respected elder, not only in his own Mara tribe, but throughout the whole region. Gajiyuma was soon renamed King Bob, and he assumed responsibility for the people gathering at the mission.

It is obvious that the local people perceived the newly-established mission as a sanctuary, within the protection of which they were safe from European violence (Hart 1970:152; Bern 1974:80; Sandefur 1979:13; Harris and Sandefur 1983:253). Barnabas Roberts, an Alawa man who came to the mission as a young boy when it first commenced, once said

'If the missionaries hadn't come, my tribe would have been all shot down.'¹³⁰

In the 1960s, there were older people at Ngukurr who could still recall the atrocities and spoke about them. Hart visited Ngukurr in 1965 and obtained information from some of these people.

The older Aborigines at the mission still talk about these murders knowing that they were protected from them. One old lady actually contrasted the present day safety of her two little grand-daughters attending the CMS school with the unfortunate little victims whose brains had been knocked out against the rocks after their parents had been shot in those earlier years. (Hart 1970:152)

One of the first missionaries, Joynt, found ample evidence all around him of atrocities and murders. Not only did he obtain stories from Aboriginal people, but also from Europeans who boasted of their exploits. Joynt was told, for example, of a young boy who was flogged to death for running away and then his body hidden in the river to be eaten by crocodiles.

(aborigines) are treated worse than animals, and sometimes even referred to as 'black animals' and terms ever worse ... In years gone by the natives have been shot down like game, and hundreds killed in a spirit of revenge. I have met men that boast of shooting the poor unprotected black 'just for fun'. (Joynt 1918:7)

Gajiyuma or King Bob was another great Aboriginal leader and statesman in the tradition of Mariac at Raffles Bay and of Mira at Escape Cliffs and Darwin. He was one of those men who were astute enough to see the inevitability of the total destruction of his people by hostile European forces unless he sought the protection of those Europeans he could trust. He saw in the Mission the salvation of his people, and he spent the last few months of his life gathering the scattered remnants into safety.

'My mother and her brothers and all the others went to the Mission. That old man, Bob, was the one who told them. Everyone was still afraid of the white men and they were unsure of the missionaries — perhaps they, too, were going to shoot them! But that old man said "It's alright. They aren't going to shoot everyone! They are just schoolteachers! They will look after the children. All the children will be safe there." Then he told my father's family and everybody else too. He walked and walked everywhere. He told everybody that they did not have to be afraid any more. They all came to the Old Mission. A very big group — in fact everybody came.' (Dinah Garadji 14 Oct. 1982)¹³¹

Gajiyuma died in peace at the mission in February of the following year, 1909. One of the Aboriginal missionaries from Yarrabah, Horace Reid (1909) recorded his final words.

'Jesus come down alonga me — me no 'fraid now.'

By Gajiyuma's death early in 1909, over two hundred people had gathered at the mission. They were the remnants of the Mara, Wardarang, Alawa, Ngalakan and Ngandi tribes, the southernmost members of the Rembarrnga and Nunggubuyu tribes and some of the easternmost members of the Mangarayi tribe.

It is ironic that in the very year that the mission was founded, the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company was liquidated. The key pastoral region of their project had been the site of MacCartney's failed Florida Station on the Goyder River. Their error was in presuming that the failure of earlier pastoral efforts was entirely due to the spearing of cattle. It was only one of many factors, all of which combined in eastern Arnhem Land to make conventional cattle raising impossible.

The cattle found the coarse native grasses entirely unpalatable and, worried by ticks and mosquitoes, speared by blacks, and eaten by crocodiles, it is small wonder that the remainder went wild. Supplies were difficult to obtain, men refused to stay on the stations and markets were remote. No one was surprised when by 1908 the remaining cattle were returned to Hodgson Downs and the company liquidated. Once again the formidable physical barriers of the Far North had proved too much for the white man and another failure was chalked up. (Bauer 1964:157-158)

The killing of Aboriginal people in the region, however, did not stop and it continued in many parts of the Northern Territory well into this century and within the living memory of many people. Some of the better smaller leases of land forfeited by the 'Eastern and African' were taken up by men like George Conway who had been members of the hunting parties. The presence of the mission, however, made open massacre less likely as it was now more public. The mission even intervened legally to prevent police reprisals. Not only was there now a pro-Aboriginal group of Europeans actually resident in the area with government support and access to various authorities, the mission itself provided a refuge. Hunted Aboriginal people now had somewhere to go.

Although speaking of the Daly River region, Willshire was one of those police who typified the anti-mission sentiment. As noted, Willshire and those like him despised missionaries for harbouring Aboriginal people. Willshire (1896: 26) went on to accuse missions of providing a safe haven for Aboriginal resisters to regroup and 'concoct schemes'. In other words, even people like Willshire admitted the role of the missions in preventing them from killing Aborigines.

Thus it was that a scattered and hunted people found a home. Even those who, not without reason, are critical of the later ethnocentric and authoritarian attitudes of the missionaries towards the Aboriginal people, are nevertheless obliged to admit the initial contribution they made to the preservation of Aboriginal life (e.g. Bern 1974:80).

Mission life

A great deal of information about life on the Roper River Mission is provided by missionaries in autobiographical or descriptive works such as Joynt (1918) and Langford-Smith (1935) and in the writings of visitors such as Masson (1915) and Wilkins (1928). Furthermore, the official records of the Church Missionary Society still exist and, in total, an accurate picture of life at the mission is available. The history of the Roper River Mission has been written from a sympathetic point of view by Cole (1968) and from an antagonistic point of view by Bern (1974). They differ, not so much in detail, but in the interpretation of events. The daily activities of the mission in its earliest years are of interest to this discussion only in so far as they shed light on language usage at the time and the reasons for the rise of the creole. Only sufficient details will therefore be provided to enable discussion of the sociolinguistic features of the interactions between the various groups involved.

The missionaries saw their task as promoting both the spiritual and material welfare of the Aboriginal people. In particular, they believed their material welfare to be best advanced by the creation of a self-sustaining, settled village economy based on agriculture and cattle — what Bern (1974:80) terms a 'total institution'.¹³² In less than a year, they had erected staff houses, a health clinic ('dispensary') and a school; cleared, fenced and partly planted seven acres of land for farming and commenced stock work with the purchase of a herd of cattle from Urapunga Station (Cole 1968:6). The Aboriginal people were encouraged to assist in this work and many did, being rewarded with food and other goods.

There were over 200 Aboriginal people at the mission within a few months, although by the middle of 1909 these numbers were fluctuating, but never falling below about 70 (Cole 1968:6). There were two main reasons for this. One was simply that within two months of the establishment of the mission came the onset of the wet season, a time when movement was restricted and when the people were glad enough to stay near this new food supply. This type of fluctuation of numbers is still typical of life in settled Aboriginal communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory today. They are good places to be in during the wet season, providing permanent shelter and easy access to European foods. The dry season, by contrast enables hunting and foraging to be engaged in over a wide area. The ease of movement and reliability of fair weather also means that ceremonies are normally scheduled for the dry season. Thus by about May of 1909, there would have been considerable movement in and out of the mission. The missionaries noted it, and they were concerned about it because they failed to understand the pattern. This same failure to understand the relationship between ceremonial obligation and what the whites have come to term 'walkabout' has persistently, even to the present day, unfairly resulted in Aboriginal people being regarded as shiftless and unreliable. The other reason for fluctuation was, as Bern (1974:80) notes, that the danger of being shot did in fact decrease markedly over the next few years, although it was a long time before it disappeared altogether. The establishment of the mission at the time of the demise of the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company was a happy coincidence because, as noted, the mere presence of the mission acted as a deterrent to any further systematic or large-scale killing of Aboriginal people in the region which may otherwise have transpired as George Conway and others took over the forfeited land.

Aside from building, agriculture, and stockwork, Huthnance reported¹³³ to the Church Mission Association in 1909 that they had commenced a number of other activities. The mission staff had been able '... to conduct a school for children, to hold a daily class for adults, and to frequently gather people together for services'. For the children (which included teenagers), the mornings were taken up with formal lessons in school and the afternoons by practical work around the mission station.

The Mission owns two hundred square miles on the banks of the Roper River, and very largely supports itself, killing its own cattle for meat, growing its own vegetables, and milking its own goats. The work is done by black boys under the direction of the white men, and the girls learn simple housework and cooking. Morning is spent in school, where the children are taught to read, write, and do simple arithmetic. But this part of their education progresses slowly; they read aloud, but do not understand what they read ... (Masson 1915:140)

School, of course, meant formal exposure to the English language as did the regular church services, although it will be argued in Chapter 11 that the missionaries not only used Pidgin English on many informal occasions, but probably also used it at times even in school and church.

Church was held in the enclosure, round which were grouped the rough Mission dwellings, made of bark, of branches of trees, and of loosely fitting iron ... In the Centre stood the head missionary, dressed in white; opposite him, the

rest of the Mission staff and the strangers in rough bush clothes or ship's uniform. To each side were the Mission children, girls in neat cotton dresses, and plump little boys clad only in sarongs made of flour bags, looking demurely down at their hymn-books, and occasionally stealing a sly glance in the direction of the newcomers. In one corner crouched a few myall blacks — those who did not belong to the Mission but who were encamped near by, and were temporarily working there at herding goats or digging, in return for tucker and tobacco. In the midst of this orthodox Christian service, some of the blacks sat with their hands over their eyes so that they might not see those of their relatives on the opposite benches whom they were forbidden by aboriginal law ever to behold. They all joined in the hymns, singing in sweet tuneful voices. The words they knew by heart, though their meaning was far beyond their comprehension; nor could they even read them, although they kept their eyes fixed on their hymn-books in grave imitation of the missionaries. They listened eagerly to the sermon, and vied with each other in answering questions. Their answers were as often right as wrong, yet it was obvious to the spectators that not real thought, but anxiety to please and aptitude to imitate were what guided them. (Masson 1915:139-140)

An important feature of mission life and organisation was the dormitory system. Early in the mission's development, a system was introduced in which the children were boarded in dormitories. I have as yet been unable to determine when the first dormitories were actually constructed and put into use, but they were certainly there when Elsie Masson visited in 1913. They were rough, makeshift, temporary constructions but they were nevertheless already in use. Although it was not absolutely obligatory for children to live in the dormitories, it was a generally accepted understanding that long-term members of the mission community should allow their children to live in them with all the other children. It was also expected that children would advise the missionaries before going away from the mission with their families.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the conditions in the Roper River region immediately prior to the establishment of the mission in 1908 and conditions at the mission after 1908. It will be argued that the factors which demand that a pidgin undergo creolisation were all present. These included language loss, social disruption and, most important of all, a new peer group of children and young people who lacked a common language. These issues will be discussed in detail and against a background of theoretical perspectives in Chapter 11.

SECTION IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this Section, the historical and sociolinguistic data provided in Chapters 4 to 8 are analysed and discussed from the perspective of the theoretical linguistic and sociolinguistic theories examined in Chapters 2 and 3. In particular, this Section addresses those major issues raised in Chapter 1 — the origin of Kriol, the place of Kriol and its pidgin antecedents in the general history of Pacific pidgins and creoles, and the contribution of this new data to theories of the pidginisation and creolisation of languages.

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CHAPTER 9

PIDGINISATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Review of historical chapters

The purpose of this review is to provide a summary which, from an historical sociolinguistic standpoint, places in perspective the extensive social and historical information provided in Chapters 4 to 8.

1. It is not known when the first contact language may have arisen in the long linguistic history of what is now the coast and hinterland — the Top End — of the Northern Territory. It is known, however, that around the beginning of the 18th century or even earlier, regular annual trade in trepang and other goods commenced between coastal North Australia and Indonesia and that a contact language was in wide use for the purposes of that trade. Although the trade has long been associated with Macassar, which was an important home port for many of its financiers, organisers and leaders, sufficient information survives about the language used between the trepang traders and Aborigines of coastal north Australia to indicate that it was not the full indigenous language of Macassar, but a pidgin — the 'Macassan' Pidgin. It is highly probable that the major language of the crews of the trading vessels was the Portuguese-Malay Pidgin or trade language of the archipelago for which the Macassan language was an important lexical source, particularly for the variant of the Portuguese-Malay Pidgin used on the Macassan trepanging vessels. It was this Portuguese-Malay Pidgin which was adapted and repidginised for use in northern Australia where it was extended from its original purpose to become a lingua franca among members of separate Aboriginal speech communities.

2. Intensive contact with English-speaking Europeans began in the first half of the 19th century when British military garrisons were established at Melville Island (1824), Raffles Bay (1827) and Port Essington (1838). Whereas there was little linguistic contact at the short-lived Melville Island garrison, there is clear evidence of both the Aboriginal use of English and European use of an Aboriginal language during the equally brief Raffles Bay garrison. During the eleven years of the British garrison at Port Essington, however, what was clearly an English-based pidgin developed. Indeed some Aboriginal people acquired competence in the English language itself.

3. There was no such intense contact with English inland in the Northern Territory until around 1870. Some English words may perhaps have arrived in advance of the Europeans. Some may have diffused southwards from Port

Essington. Leichhardt certainly encountered English words in 1844 when he was still over 300 kilometres inland from Port Essington (although not as far south as the later pastoral frontier). The European explorers, when they communicated at all with Aboriginal people, more often than not did so by 'dumb barter' or pantomime but also on occasion tried to use a reduced or jargon-like form of English. These and other ephemeral occurrences of English, however, did not constitute a pidgin, being neither more nor less than the unsystematic use of a few words.

4. Even though the attempt to create a settlement at Escape Cliffs at the mouth of the Adelaide River in 1865 was abortive, the indications are that an English-based pidgin was beginning to develop. What is now Darwin was surveyed in 1869 and settled permanently in 1870. An English-based pidgin developed rapidly as a lingua franca used among the Larakia and other Aboriginal groups and the Europeans. In 1874 the first Chinese migrants arrived and soon vastly outnumbered the Europeans. They brought with them the already established Chinese Pidgin English, which was important in setting the final form of the Pidgin English of Darwin and the mining camps.

5. The first substantial European presence in the pastoral frontier was the Overland Telegraph construction teams in 1872. Information on communication between European and Aboriginal people in the two construction years is sparse. It is evident that a limited amount of verbal communication did occur. It is almost certainly true that this communication involved only a small number of people from the nearby Aboriginal groups. There was, nevertheless, a general public view among both Europeans and Aborigines in later years that the Overland Telegraph era marked the beginning of Pidgin English in the Roper River region.

6. Very little is known about the next fourteen or so years from 1873, which saw the beginnings of the pastoral frontier. There was no official presence anywhere in the region although large numbers of European drovers, prospectors, fortune-seekers and fugitives moved through the area or temporarily resided in it at the sly-grog shanties at Borroloola and Roper Bar. It is also evident that there was some interethnic verbal communication during this era although it cannot have been particularly widespread, being perhaps restricted to Roper Bar and Borroloola where Aboriginal people were in residence on the outskirts of what were becoming small frontier towns. Nevertheless at these places, from the end of the Overland Telegraph construction in 1873 to the mid-1880s there was maintenance of linguistic continuity, the pidgin remaining in use and developing. Particularly was this so at Roper Bar where, from the beginnings of permanent language contact during the Overland Telegraph, there was a small but unbroken European presence in the region which slowly expanded both in numbers and distribution as the township expanded and as the surrounding pastoral properties were progressively leased, stocked, and permanently settled.

7. The major period of pidgin development within the pastoral frontier came in the 1880s and 1890s as a direct consequence of permanent settlement by English-speaking Europeans. The two major milieux of Pidgin English development and usage were the pastoral properties and the frontier townships. On the pastoral properties, a small group of Europeans were in close daily contact with a much larger number of resident and transient Aboriginal people, as well as with Chinese domestics and foreign Aboriginal stockmen. In the frontier towns there were permanent fringe-dwelling Aboriginal residents and a small

permanent population of Europeans and Chinese, as well as a significant transient population of European travellers, Aboriginal people of the district, and multiracial ship's crews. Both these milieux were fruitful contexts for the development of pidgins to serve as *lingue franche*.

8. By the turn of the century, there was a convergence of the various Pidgin Englishes into one widely-understood Northern Territory Pidgin English. The pidgins spoken in places as far apart as Darwin, Elsey Station, and Borroloola were all mutually comprehensible despite the existence of local variation. A major factor in this convergence was the general mobility of both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population.

9. In the Roper River region, as in other parts of the pastoral frontier, the late 19th century and early 20th century were characterised by massacres and intense social and cultural disruption. When the Christian Mission was established in 1908, Aboriginal people perceived it as a haven which afforded protection from aggression and from the war of extermination. Probably every Aboriginal person of the region gathered there. Within a few years the pidgin began to be creolised by the younger generation as the primary language of the new speech community. This was the beginning of Kriol and to the children of the next generation, Kriol was not only their primary language but also their mother tongue. (This will be discussed in Chapter 11.)

Northern Territory Pidgin English as a pidgin

Before commencing the discussion of theoretical aspects of the rise of Northern Territory Pidgin English, it is necessary to establish that it was a pidgin and not, for example, a jargon on the one hand nor simply non-standard English on the other.

Firstly, Northern Territory Pidgin English had its own distinctive and agreed lexicon. Most items of the lexicon were ultimately English-derived but included many of those innovations which have come to be associated with Australian and many Pacific pidgins. These lexical items include all same, been, by and by, fellow, gammon, picanniny, savvy, too much and many more. Their meanings were agreed and constant and did not vary, as far as can be ascertained, over a wide geographical distribution but the lexicon was limited to a narrow range of subjects.

Secondly, Northern Territory Pidgin English was characterised by a special syntax which was simplified in relation to Standard English but which was agreed upon and obeyed. Some of the obvious features of that syntax were:

1. No auxiliary verb 'to be'
that one my father (Parkhouse 1895:640)
2. No auxiliary verb 'to do'
Which way whitefellow sit down, missus? (Gunn 1905:27)
3. Use of no more as negation
me no more frightened ... (Gunn 1905:76)
4. Indication of past tense by been
... big mob bin sing out ... (Gunn 1905:4)

5. Future tense indicated by by-and-by
... by-em-by catchem crab ... (Searcy 1912:75)
6. Future conditional indicated by suppose
s'pose me no more break him ... (Gunn 1905:68)
7. Absence of plural markers on nouns
... carry 'em two fellow bag ... (Spencer 1928:591)
8. No definite article
... all about take kinoo (canoe) ... (Masson 1915:166)

There are many other syntactical features but the above selection demonstrates some of the ways in which Northern Territory Pidgin English had and obeyed its own rules. It was not simply 'foreigner's' non-standard English, nor was it a jargon. It was a pidgin. The lexicon of the pidgin will be discussed in Chapter 10 but the remainder of this chapter will deal with theoretical aspects of the process of pidginisation itself as evidenced by the Northern Territory data.

The conditions of pidginisation

With regard to those milieux which are said frequently to give rise to pidgins, neither Northern Territory Pidgin English nor the 'Macassan' Pidgin which preceded it were in any way unusual. Northern Territory Pidgin English was typical of what Reinecke (1964:536) considers to be 'settlers' pidgins'. The 'Macassan' Pidgin appears to have been typical of what Mühlhäusler (1974:33) calls 'indigenous trade pidgins'.

Certainly, the 'Macassan' Pidgin was a trade pidgin although in this context it could be asked if the term 'indigenous' has any definable meaning. How far apart can trader and client be for their trade language still to be considered indigenous? Where does one draw a line between local and foreign? What Mühlhäusler really means by the term 'indigenous' is 'non-European'. Although other peoples could have sailed all around the world for the purposes of trade and exploitation, generally speaking they did not. In recent centuries this has been an essentially European activity, part of the development and spread of the capitalist world-economy. The trade activities which preceded the Europeans were generally much more local in nature. Both sides usually understood the nature of the relationship and accepted its advantages. This does not mean that the contact between the Indonesian traders and the Aborigines was always harmonious nor does it mean that the traders never considered themselves superior to their clients. What it does mean is that the relationship was non-threatening in that it was not linked to a policy of European colonial expansion and capitalist penetration. In this sense, the trade between the Indonesian trepangers and their Aboriginal neighbours was indigenous to their region, as was thus the 'Macassan' Pidgin with which they communicated.

On the other hand, the Pidgin English of the Northern Territory unquestionably arose as part of European colonial expansion. The nature of the contact was such that it threatened the very fabric of Aboriginal society. The Europeans were invaders who arrived suddenly and in force. Although occasional people such as Barker at Raffles Bay may have tried to involve the local Aboriginal people in determining certain aspects of their relationship, such efforts were

doomed. The Aborigines were finally to have no choice but to accept and resign themselves to the European invaders and to give up their social and cultural autonomy. The Europeans assumed their own social and cultural superiority, and they enforced it by sheer weight of numbers and by the gun. Yet the Europeans also needed the Aborigines to carry out a number of tasks as domestics, trackers and stockmen and to serve them in various other ways. The social situation which eventually emerged was typical of European settlement in widely separated parts of the world, although, as shown, it is perhaps more correctly termed European invasion. It was the well-attested milieu of the settlers' pidgin.

All these features of the two separate milieux, however, are features concomitant with the rise of the pidgins but they are not directly causal. It is, for this reason, useful to consider the 'Macassan' Pidgin and the English Pidgin together. This study deals essentially with the rise of the English-based pidgin and its subsequent creolisation. The inclusion of the 'Macassan' Pidgin, as well as giving an understanding of the language contact background of the region, provides a valuable contrast to the English Pidgin, particularly in relation to the conditions under which it arose. Without the 'Macassan' Pidgin, it would be tempting to emphasise strongly the context of European settlement and to see it, as many have done in the past, as actually causing the pidgin to develop. The inclusion of both pidgins demands that only conditions common to both milieux be seen as necessary conditions for the pidginisation of a language.

In Chapter 2, after an examination of the literature, it was shown that the most recent theoretical perspective on the process of pidginisation was that it was normal second language acquisition under special sociolinguistic circumstances. The major sociolinguistic factor was said to be that the access to the target language was limited. It was concluded in Chapter 2 that in a situation of culture contact, three conditions were necessary for a pidgin to arise. These were:

- a) the absence of effective bilingualism;
- b) the need and desire to communicate;
- c) inadequate opportunities to learn the target language.

These conditions will now be critically assessed with respect to the 'Macassan' Pidgin and the English Pidgin and the data relating to them in Chapters 4 to 7.

The absence of effective bilingualism

The lack of effective bilingualism was an obvious characteristic both of the South-east Asian/Aboriginal contact and the later European/Aboriginal contact. Although the South-east Asian traders came from what were, technically, neighbouring countries, they did not belong to the same speech community. Indeed, the South-east Asian archipelago itself contained a large variety of languages and a number of speech communities for whom a trade language had long been necessary for commercial interaction. The extension of these commercial activities southward to the Australian coast brought the traders into contact with Aboriginal speech communities. Despite the likelihood of prior contact with some groups from the archipelago, it is evident that initially neither the trepangers nor the Aborigines knew each other's languages and that they did not share a common third language. This absence of effective bilingualism is even

more evident in the case of the English-speaking European invaders. They came from a more distant place and a very different cultural and linguistic background. At no point had their speech communities ever adjoined, and there had never historically been any opportunity for one group to acquire a third language common to both groups through common association with some other speech community. Thus in both these situations of language contact, the first necessary prerequisite to the development of a pidgin, the lack of effective bilingualism, was an evident sociolinguistic feature.

The need and desire to communicate

The need and the desire to communicate, as necessary prerequisites to the development of a pidgin, were clear features of the early periods of contact between Aboriginal speech communities and both the South-east Asian traders and the European invaders.

It has already been observed in earlier chapters that frequently the main emotion evinced by Aboriginal people on encountering foreigners was curiosity. Traditional accounts of the first encounters with the 'Macassans' preserve the same sense of curiosity. History has borne out that Aboriginal people, mostly to their own detriment, often chose to draw close to foreigners out of interest or out of a desire to gain new materials or new insights or perhaps even out of an even deeper desire to understand a new dimension to their universe, to incorporate the new knowledge into their world view.

Whatever their initial reactions were to the 'Macassan' trepangers, it is evident that within a short space of time, Aboriginal people appreciated the benefits of establishing a trading relationship which extended beyond dumb barter and so required verbal communication. It is also evident that this same realisation occurred many times at separate locations and in distinct speech communities along the northern coast. It is true that relationships were not harmonious everywhere. In some localities, Aborigines and 'Macassan' trepangers seem to have perceived each other as a threat. It may even be true that some Aboriginal groups saw the trepangers only as a people to be plundered for the useful goods they carried on their vessels. It is also plain that in a number of widespread speech communities the benefits of long-term trading relationships were perceived and valued. Such relationships demanded verbal communication.

The need and desire to communicate is not only an attitude which is basic to the development of a pidgin, it is also an attitude which, in the context of potential pidgin genesis, frequently determines which language is pidginised. The group to which communication is the more needful has the greater incentive to assay the acquisition of the other language. This is particularly so in the context in which social superiority and inferiority are not so clearly defined and where, theoretically, there may have been some kind of choice of which language finally became the major lexical donor language. In such a context, the 'superstrate language' carries no particular inference of social superiority. It is simply the superstrate because it becomes the target language of the group who set out to acquire the language of the others.

It is not, therefore, difficult to hypothesise the social situation and events which would have led to the selection of the traders' language as the target language. By the very nature of their occupation, the Indonesian traders were

accustomed on their travels to dealing with many different languages and cultures by the use of a widely-accepted lingua franca, the 'Portuguese-Malay' Trade Pidgin of the South-east Asian archipelago. They may even, like the Aboriginal people after them, have presumed that all foreigners understood it.

In any case, as shown in Chapter 3, the status of the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin was such that it was the natural choice rather than any of the first languages of the multicultural crew members. The traders would therefore have used the language confidently in this new context of commercial enterprise. It would not, in any case, have been feasible for traders such as they were to set about acquiring new contact languages in every locality which they visited. The Australian venture was, after all, a repeat of many similar such ventures.

To many Aboriginal people of Australia's northern coasts, the traders were something new and intriguing. They represented new materials, new ideas, new insights, new possibilities. They had the potential to extend the limits of the known world. To these Aboriginal people, communication with the fishermen-traders was highly desirable. Even at a purely material level, the Aboriginal people needed the trepangers more than the trepangers needed them. The traders were, in fact, capable of doing their own trepang gathering but they clearly appreciated local assistance in doing so. They also hoped to exchange manufactured goods for pearls and tortoise shell and obviously would have preferred to operate where they were well received, especially during the long on-shore curing process. Despite all this, it was the Aborigines who had most to gain. The traders were their only source of desirable manufactured goods and their only link with the world beyond their own coasts. Communication with them was therefore highly desirable.

The situation was thus that the traders would have confidently expected to use the 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin while the Aborigines would have had strong incentives to set about acquiring it. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the Aborigines belonged to multilingual speech communities and certainly had well-developed strategies for second language acquisition. The South-east Asian traders were no doubt multilingual as well, but they were already of diverse origins. They already used a pidgin among themselves and were accustomed to using it to communicate with others. The sociolinguistic circumstances thus dictated that the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin would become the target language. Other aspects of the situation, which will be analysed later, determined that the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin would become repidginised rather than acquired precisely as presented.

The failure to develop an English-based pidgin at the first British settlement is evidence that the need or desire to communicate is a necessary prerequisite to pidginisation. At Fort Dundas on Melville Island, no pidgin ever arose, and the critical point was obviously passed as early as some time on the actual day when the British garrison arrived. Initially, some bartering was attempted and although both sides were obviously apprehensive, some contact was made. Within a few hours both groups had demonstrated aggression. The British built their stockade and retreated behind it, never again to attempt seriously to establish any friendly intercourse. Thus the second prerequisite to the development of a pidgin was missing. The lack of effective bilingualism which was obviously true of the situation on Melville Island was not alone sufficient to prompt the development of a pidgin. It would also have been necessary that there be some need or desire to communicate on both sides. In other words, no matter how motivated one group is to acquire the language of the other group, unless they are presented with a target language, even a highly restricted target language,

there is nothing to pidginise. There was, as described, the attempt on the part of the British to capture a Tiwi man and teach him English so that he could tell his countrymen to stay away from the garrison and stop harassing them. This attempt is in some ways reminiscent of the teaching of the *reconnaissance* language to West Africans by the Portuguese. It is interesting to speculate on what may have transpired had the British succeeded, but their captive escaped and no communication took place.

There was, by contrast, communication at all the other early contact sites, and the sociolinguistic circumstances of the development of the first English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory bore some resemblance to the circumstances which led to the development of the 'Macassan' Pidgin. In other words, the Aboriginal people perceived the newcomers as people from whom they could gain both material goods and new knowledge, and they had little hesitation in approaching them and initiating communication.

At Raffles Bay, within a few days of the garrison's arrival and following what the British construed as theft, the local Aboriginal people were no longer welcome near the settlement. After the massacre of some of their people, they kept entirely away and the little verbal communication and language acquisition that had been commenced was suspended. The situation changed entirely with the arrival of Barker and his determined efforts to win back the confidence of the Aboriginal people.

It is intriguing to speculate upon what may have happened linguistically at Raffles Bay had Barker and the garrison remained, because Barker's attitude created what was a special sociolinguistic situation. For the duration of Barker's presence there was no clearly defined social superiority or inferiority. He acted in ways which quite obviously led Mariac and his people to believe that Barker considered them equals. The most unarguable demonstration of this was seen in Barker's firm resolve to learn to speak the local language. What appears to have been happening was that at least at the leadership level, there was an equal need and desire on both sides to learn the language of the other. There were two target languages. Barker and the garrison, however, were unexpectedly withdrawn and what could have been an event unique in Australia's complex linguistic history did not transpire.

The first substantial development of an English-based pidgin occurred at Port Essington during the years 1838 to 1849. When the British arrived, the local Aboriginal people, remembering Barker's friendship of nearly ten years ago, were overjoyed. They were anxious to relate, anxious to help, anxious to be involved, anxious, almost desperate, to communicate. They dredged up almost forgotten English words, tried using the 'Macassan' Pidgin and learnt new English words with great rapidity. Their obvious need and desire to communicate was such that the question of what was the target language was established from the moment the British arrived. An English-based pidgin arose very rapidly. In fact, some of the Aborigines most closely associated with the British are said to have spoken 'good English', a point which is important and which will be considered more closely later.

At Escape Cliffs, it is obvious that there was great desire to communicate on both sides during the first few days and that some English words and even some English songs were actually taught. Finniss, the survey-team leader, however, had no such desire, and after his arrival he effectively stifled most communication, although it is evident that unofficially some of Finniss's men did in fact remain in contact with the Aboriginal people. Despite the earlier

killing of some of the local people, an amicable rapport seems to have been re-established as soon as Finniss was recalled. There was willingness to communicate on both sides. It is known that some Europeans learnt and used Woolna words, but it is clear that for general communication a pidgin developed and was used. The desire to communicate was generally present in both groups. Indeed, the Europeans began to need their relationship with the Woolna, particularly because of the fresh food they could barter, but despite this need, it was English which became the target language and was pidginised to become the medium of communication.

In early Darwin, the desire to communicate on the part of the Larakia was evident from the onset, as indeed was the desire of other nearby groups such as the Woolna who drew near in order to be involved in the new events which were transforming their region. A few Europeans learned to speak Larakia, but they were the exceptions rather than the rule. They happened to be interested, but they were outnumbered by an ever-increasing number of people to whom the Aborigines and their languages were not particularly important. The onus of language acquisition was on the local Aboriginal people and their desire to communicate was such that they responded and an English-based pidgin developed rapidly.

Within the pastoral frontier, although there were some initial attempts at communication, the consequence of aggression and violence was that there were many European and Aboriginal people who had no intention or desire to communicate with each other. There were a few Aboriginal people, nonetheless, who chose or were forced to enter into a relationship with the Europeans which demanded that they communicate verbally. The onus appears always to have been on the Aboriginal person as the language acquirer and the English speaker as the model provider. With the subjugation of the Aboriginal people and their gradual acceptance of the inevitability of adopting cattle station life, Pidgin English became closely associated with European/Aboriginal communication within the pastoral region. It was possibly more a matter of need than desire, but nevertheless the need led to linguistic innovation.

The need and desire to communicate verbally were critical prerequisites to the development of both the 'Macassan' Pidgin and Pidgin English. Where there is no such need or desire, pidgins do not arise.

Inadequate opportunities to learn the target language

It was argued in Chapter 2, from the sociolinguistic logic expressed or implied in the more recent literature on the subject of the pidginisation of languages, that the lack of effective bilingualism and the need or desire to communicate were not factors which were alone sufficient to prompt the emergence of a pidgin. Although they are necessary prerequisites to the development of a pidgin, they are also basic to a number of other language acquisition circumstances. It could be demonstrated, for example, that a lack of effective bilingualism and the need or desire to communicate are the basic reasons for the acquisition of the majority language of a country by many migrant groups. In such a situation, however, the migrant is immersed in the target language, a language which many of his migrant predecessors have already acquired.

Many modern theorists, however, now hold to the view that the essential determinant of pidginisation is the lack of opportunity to acquire the target language — what Mühlhäusler (1974:58) terms an 'imperfect language acquisition device', but one which is imperfect for social or other external reasons.

Was this true of the 'Macassan' Pidgin? The literature suggests a number of reasons why the opportunity to acquire a particular target language may be inadequate. The socially superior group may, for example, not talk to the local people unless absolutely necessary or when they do talk, they may only talk about a restricted range of subjects. This may or may not have been true of the early stages of South-east Asian contact, but in the long term, there was a much more obvious and important restrictive factor which was geographical and temporal in nature. Like many such trading relationships, the trade was seasonal. This meant that language contact and therefore opportunities for language acquisition were also seasonal and therefore restricted.

The South-east Asian trepang traders arrived in December by the north-west monsoon winds and left in April by the south-east trade winds. It was during these months that the target language could be heard and that opportunities for language acquisition generally presented themselves. There was differential language contact. Some groups had closer relationships with the traders than others while some individuals within these groups had more intense contact than others. Some Aborigines even returned to Macassar on the praus. Although these people no doubt acquired the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin of the prau crews and perhaps even the language of Macassar itself, the majority of the people had no such opportunities. Most people's opportunities to hear and acquire the target language were much less continuous, being limited to four or five months of the year and further restricted again within that time for those not directly involved with the traders. Furthermore, it is certain that for the majority of Aboriginal people, communication with the traders was for restricted purposes only, that is, it was limited to a small number of topics.

This restriction of opportunity was clearly a critical factor in determining whether or not the target language would be pidginised. Had the traders remained in continuous daily contact with the speech communities of north Australia and had all the Aboriginal people been in close contact with them and had the relationship been such that communication was necessary in a wider range of situations, pidginisation may not have taken place. Given the absence of effective bilingualism and given the need and desire to communicate, the Aboriginal people may have acquired the target language itself. Indeed, the target language as presented to them, the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin, would, in the hypothetical situation described above, have proved inadequate and a full language would have had to be used, perhaps the language of Macassar itself. It is even more likely in these hypothetical circumstances that the onus for language acquisition would have been on the newcomers and not the locals and that the newcomers would have been obliged to acquire the local Aboriginal language.

Such, however, was not the case. The opportunities for language acquisition were restricted and a pidgin arose. It matters not that the target language was already a pidgin. The restricted circumstances of its usage dictated that the lexical source language would be pidginised whether or not it was presented as a full language or in a modified format. As is universally the case, the Aboriginal people did not perceive that they were pidginising another language. They regarded themselves as learning the language of the other group and, as

shown, it was often referred to by Aboriginal people as Macassan or Malay. It was the restrictions on their opportunity to do what they thought they were doing which determined that their language learning endeavours would result in a pidgin.

It can be shown that restricted access to the target language was also the key factor in the emergence of Northern Territory Pidgin English although the reasons for the restrictions were different. As observed already, the absence of effective bilingualism and the need or desire to communicate were both features of the European/Aboriginal language contact situation and necessary prerequisites to that set of circumstances which would prompt the development of a pidgin. In all those places where an English-based Pidgin emerged — that is, at Port Essington, in the Darwin region and in the pastoral frontier — the restrictions were entirely social in nature.

The role of language acquirers fell to the Aboriginal people, usually, as noted earlier, because their willingness to communicate was greater and also because their language acquiring skills were more highly developed in the first place. Whatever the reasons, English became the target language and in most circumstances it was pidginised.

The European settlers deemed themselves to be naturally dominant, that is, socially, culturally and even racially superior. They considered that Aboriginal people were either doomed to extinction in the face of a superior race or, at best, destined for subservience. In such circumstances, there were severe limitations on the degree of verbal interaction which was encouraged. Even in those circumstances where the Europeans needed or were actually dependent upon the Aborigines, they still generally considered that the Aborigines were subservient and therefore the topics of conversation were limited to the immediate concerns of bartering or of domestic labour or of cattle station operation. European domination was also in part manifested in the ways they talked to Aboriginal people — the use of terms such as *lubra* instead of *woman*, *piccaninny* instead of *baby*. This is particularly evident in the use of words such as *boy*, where forms of speech were used to Aboriginal people that they could not reciprocate. The Aboriginal people were obliged to reply with a term such as *boss* or they would be considered impudent.

It is evident that Aboriginal people regarded themselves as learning English — that is, they thought that they were learning the language of the Europeans. What they acquired was a pidginised version of English because their access to the full English language was restricted. It was restricted in a number of ways. It was restricted because the Europeans only spoke to them when it suited the Europeans' own interests, it was restricted because the Europeans only spoke to them concerning a limited number of topics and it was restricted because the Europeans presented them with an inadequate model of the English language. This latter point will be taken up again later in this chapter.

It is worthwhile, in this context, to consider those situations of language contact where English was not pidginised. Fort Dundas on Melville Island can be ignored because no model was presented at all: the restriction was total. The situation at Raffles Bay, however, during Barker's commandancy was unique. Although Barker may have been ethnocentric enough to believe in the right of the British to establish their garrison at Fort Wellington, it was there that his visible ethnocentricity virtually ended. He was anxious to demonstrate to the Aboriginal people that he accepted them and that they were welcome, not only on the fringes of the garrison but in his home and in social mixing for

mutual entertainment with him and his fellow officers. Equally, the Aboriginal people welcomed his staying overnight with them and it is evident that even some of the strict Aboriginal social barriers were being eroded by the end of Barker's brief time there. As noted earlier, the developing contact language at Raffles Bay was on the way to being something more than a pidgin because many of the restrictions, which typify the limited access to the target language under which pidgins normally arise, were not present. The major restriction on access to the English language was Barker's insistence on learning and communicating in the local vernacular. By the end of Barker's regime, the situations of verbal communication were obviously increasing in scope and complexity but the linguistic innovation was cut short by a bureaucratic decision made elsewhere.

An interesting but different case was that of Port Essington. There is concrete evidence that a pidgin did develop but there is also considerable evidence that some Aboriginal people acquired something approaching the full English language. The reason for this distinction is plain. There were varying degrees of access to the target language, English. A few people were closely associated with the British and, it appears, fully accepted by them. They shipped as crew to Sydney and elsewhere and generally speaking were placed in unrestricted access to the full English language. English was consequently the language which they acquired. Most other people had much more limited access to the target language. They were spoken to less frequently about a smaller range of subjects and, in many cases, in a modified form of English. They acquired an English-based pidgin. As Leichhardt's experience showed, the greater the distance from Port Essington, the smaller the resemblance of the pidgin to standard English. Indeed, variations in English usage and competence at Port Essington may well have paralleled variations in the usage and competence in the 'Macassan' Pidgin, and for the same reasons.

A set of more recent cases are found in many of the Christian missions. In missions established late last century and early this century, in places where the use of Pidgin English did not predate the mission, pidgins did not develop (e.g. Hermannsberg Mission; Emerald River Mission, Groote Eylandt). In these situations, the Aboriginal people acquired English. Although it is true that many early missionaries did sometimes use Pidgin English, it was never the lingua franca of the people themselves and so its use had only a short currency. English was taught in school and used in church and for a variety of purposes. Pidgin English, if it was used, was in contact with its lexical source language, English and so, finally, English was acquired. In recent times it has been observed that younger Aboriginal people are sometimes less competent in English than their parents. They still learn English in school, but outside school the aboriginalisation of the community has drastically reduced the need for and the opportunity to hear and use English. Their parents learnt English in the days when their access to the target language was not particularly restricted and when the need to acquire English was greater.

These cases of contexts in which English was acquired rather than an English-based pidgin, serve to highlight the fact that in a second language acquisition situation, unrestricted access to the target language will, if it persists, finally result in acquisition of the target language itself, while restricted access to the target language will lead to a pidgin.

The 'simplification' or 'baby-talk' model revisited

The 'simplification' or 'baby-talk' approaches to explaining the genesis of pidgins were discussed in depth in Chapter 2, not as a unified model, but as a cluster of theories each of which emphasised a process of simplification as the key determining linguistic phenomenon in the development of a pidgin. Many of the more racist aspects of some simplification theories are well laid to rest, such as, for example, the claim that the 'native learner' was incapable of learning a full European language and therefore invariably produced an incomplete, jargonised version. It was also argued in Chapter 2 that simplification theories alone were inadequate to explain fully the origin of pidgins, but this is not to say that they do not contain observations which are true and which might be important.

One such observation is that superstrate or target language speakers, particularly Europeans, consciously simplified their speech when communicating with non-Europeans. Naro (1978) has demonstrated at least one incontrovertible example of deliberate and systematic simplification, while Ferguson (1971) has argued a strong case for the universal existence of special simplified registers of which 'baby-talk' may be the best known but not by any means the only example.

Although it is unlikely that there was any systematic simplification of English in the Northern Territory in the sense in which Naro (1978) discovered it for the Portuguese *reconnaissance* language, there was nevertheless a great deal of conscious simplification. No better evidence could be sought than the widespread use of infantile words such as tum tum for *food* (Goyder 1969;¹³⁴ May 1872:5; Wildey 1876:119; Daly 1887:73). This word was apparently in use at Escape Cliffs and in early Darwin and in the hinterland mining camps, but it appears to have eventually been replaced by tucker. It is clear evidence of the modification of the target language, English, for the 'benefit' of the Aboriginal learners.

Bickerton (1977:50) does not deny that such simplifications were commonplace, but his position is that the issue is irrelevant because 'there is good reason to suppose that pidgins would turn out the way they do irrespective of whether their speakers were offered "simplified" or "non-simplified" models'. Bickerton's position is not here being disputed. The evidence both of the 'Macassan' Pidgin and the English Pidgin in the Northern Territory certainly supports Bickerton's contention that the key to pidgin genesis is restricted access to the target language. This position does not, however, mean that the presentation of a modified or 'baby-talk' model is without any significance. At the very least it must have considerable effect on the lexicon, the use of tum-tum instead of *food* being an obvious example. Granted that pidgins can and do arise under circumstances where the full target language is offered but access to it is restricted, is it not also reasonable to argue that when a simplified model is offered, simplification is itself one of the dimensions of restriction? Clearly, restrictions on access to the target language can be geographical or social, but can they not also be partly linguistic? Can not one component of Mühlhäusler's 'inadequate language acquisition device' (1974: 29) be simplified input due to an inadequate model?

The monogenetic model revisited

The monogenetic model was also discussed in detail in Chapter 2. This model seeks to explain the similarities between pidgins and creoles by the proposal of a shared linguistic origin which traces all pidgins back to the original *Lingua Franca* or *Sabir* of the Mediterranean during medieval times. As was shown in Chapter 2, it is postulated in the monogenetic model that the *Lingua Franca* was the origin of the fifteenth century Portuguese pidgin of the West African slave trade which in turn was carried across the Atlantic and to the Pacific as the precursor of all pidgins, in many cases undergoing relexification to become a lexically Spanish or English pidgin. It was demonstrated that such a claim was too wide-sweeping and that it was not, in fact, an explanation for the universal phenomenon of pidginisation at all.

Nevertheless, if one begins with the Portuguese pidgin of the West African slave trade and ignores the early part of the theory, the possibility of a Portuguese ancestry does, from time to time, explain quite reasonable a number of puzzling similarities between pidgins and creoles of ostensibly diverse lexical relationships in widely separated parts of the world. At least, with regard to English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory, it explains the existence of words like *savvy* and *piccaninny*, originally derived from Portuguese or another Romance language and which are virtually universally found in pidgins and creoles.¹³⁵ They were no doubt components of nautical jargons and became part of the modified language used invariably by Europeans in addressing non-European people. These European jargons can perhaps be traced back to the Portuguese beginnings of Western maritime trade and exploitation of the non-Western world in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The existence of words like *savvy* and *piccaninny* demonstrate that there is even a small lexical connection. It was, in fact, shown in Chapter 2 that following Koefoed's detailed analysis of the evidence for monogenesis, one of the few real pieces of evidence remaining is a small number of lexical correspondences.

There are several possible sources of such words in Northern Territory Pidgin English. Firstly, it is known that words of Portuguese origin were in use in some parts of the Northern Territory coast before European settlement. In particular, *piccanini* was reported from Melville Island in the 1820s (see Chapter 5, page 117). It cannot be demonstrated, however, that the word was sufficiently widely known for this to have ultimately been its origin in the lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin English. Secondly, *savvy* and *piccaninny* are known to have been part of the lexicon of Chinese Pidgin English and to have been used by the Chinese in the Northern Territory. The third possible source is that they were part of the lexicon of the modified English spoken initially to the Aborigines by the Europeans and presented to them as the target language. This latter source appears to be the most likely major source although there certainly was later interaction between Chinese Pidgin English and the developing Northern Territory Pidgin English. The earliest attestations in the literature to the use of *savvy* by Aborigines and by Chinese are both by Sowden (1882:76, 144) in reference to Darwin in 1882, but the earliest attestations to the use of the word *piccaninny* in a Pidgin English context were in Port Essington (Sibbald, 1843:7) and early in Darwin (May 1872: 16) where it predated the arrival of the first Chinese. It is evidence, if any more were needed, that the target language offered to the Aborigines by Europeans at least in Port Essington and in Darwin was not the full English language. It is unlikely to have been particularly systematic, but may have

been derived from existing pidgins from the southern states or from the nautical jargon employed among the multicultural members of the ships' crews plying the Australian coast. It is not without significance that these nautical jargons were themselves influenced by the well-known and long-lived Chinese Pidgin English. These issues of lexical origin will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

As noted, the existence of a few words does not demonstrate genetic affiliation although the connection of those words with fifteenth century Portuguese is an interesting side issue. There is, however, the possibility of a more substantial connection between at least one of the Northern Territory Pidgin Englishes and the fifteenth century Portuguese pidgins. It is a distinct possibility, alluded to in Chapter 6, that the English Pidgin spoken at Port Essington may have been related to Portuguese through the relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin.

From early in the sixteenth century and for some centuries thereafter, a Portuguese pidgin was unarguably an important language of commerce within the South-east Asian archipelago. As discussed in Chapter 2, the fifteenth century Portuguese pidgin of West Africa became the language of the Portuguese 'factories' and major trading centres in Asia such as Malacca, Singapore, Macao and Tugu (Thompson 1961:107, 112-113). For much of this time, trade flourished between Macassar and the major Portuguese port of Malacca. Trading boats had mixed Portuguese and local crews, and the influence of Portuguese on the existing Malay or Arabic-Malay trade languages was profound (Urry and Walsh 1979:5). As discussed in Chapter 4, the trade language which evolved could best be termed a 'Portuguese-Malay' pidgin (Whinnom 1956:9), arising by the partial relexification of the existing Malay pidgins by a Portuguese pidgin. After the decline of Portuguese influence and during the era of Dutch supremacy, the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin continued to survive and its use was, in fact, insisted upon by the Dutch or by local rulers allied with them (Bowen 1971:940; Boxer 1969:126).

The 'Macassan' trepanging operations began in North Australia sometime shortly after the Dutch ousted the Portuguese and disarrayed the previously established trading connections. It was argued in Chapter 4 that the language of the trepang traders would have been the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin. It was further argued that this 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin was the lexical source language of the 'Macassan' Pidgin of the Northern Territory coast. The possibility of a relationship between Northern Territory Pidgin English and the Portuguese pidgin of West Africa rests, therefore, upon the assumption that the 'Macassan' Pidgin was relexified on contact with English. At Port Essington, there was some evidence of this possibility.

There is, firstly, the circumstantial but compellingly logical evidence of language usage. Whereas it is indisputable that at first the Aboriginal people of Port Essington spoke to the Europeans in the 'Macassan' Pidgin — in what Earl (1842:140) termed 'a horrid *patois* of the Macassar dialect', it is also indisputable that within a few years, the same Aboriginal people were using an English-based pidgin. How did this linguistic transformation occur? Did they suspend the use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin and set about acquiring another pidgin based on a new target language, English, or did they continue their initial endeavours to use the 'Macassan' Pidgin and relexify it, gradually using an increasing number of English words as they acquired them? It seems quite possible that a relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin is what occurred. In this context, it is significant that Earl's statement (1842:140) that 'nearly

all the words the natives use when speaking with us are Macassarese' was made in July 1840, some eighteen months after the garrison had been established and communication between Aborigines and Europeans was well established.

Secondly, the evidence of increasing knowledge of English which Leichhardt encountered as he approached Port Essington is particularly relevant. The appropriate extracts from Leichhardt's journal are given in Chapter 5. At the headwaters of the South Alligator River, three weeks' journey from Port Essington, he encountered Aboriginal people possessing some European goods. Utilising a word list he had earlier obtained from Port Essington, Leichhardt was able to elicit the direction in which Port Essington lay and to check the local people's knowledge of Macassan place-names on the coast. Words from the 'Macassan' Pidgin seem to have been used in the exchange. A few days later, Leichhardt met Aboriginal people who spoke to him in a mixture of 'Macassan' Pidgin and English Pidgin. Leichhardt (1847:495) recorded the words in his diary although he did not at the time understand any of them. He ascertained their meanings some weeks later in Port Essington.

Perikot, Nokot, Mankitterre, Lumbo Lumbo, Nana Nana Nana
Very good, No good, Macassans ... very ... far (?)

Perikot and Nokot were from the English *very good* and *no good*, Mankitterre from the Macassan Mangkasara (see page 102) and lumbo from the Macassan *lompo big, large*. Nana has not been identified.

At the mouth of the East Alligator River, Leichhardt heard distinct English words including 'commandant', 'come here' and 'very good' although he was still obliged to communicate by means of his word list, asking for water and directions (pp. 502-503). By 10 December, Leichhardt was able to record connected Pidgin English speech.

You no bread, no flour, no rice, no backi — you no good!
 Balanda plenty bread, plenty flour, plenty rice, plenty
 backi! Balanda very good. (pp. 522-523)

The only word from the 'Macassan' Pidgin in the words Leichhardt actually recorded on this occasion was *balanda* (see page 145). By 15 December, two days from Port Essington, Leichhardt found no barriers to communication at all.

Leichhardt's observations demonstrate that there was competence in the 'Macassan' Pidgin quite a long way inland and he also found that from a point about three hundred kilometres to the south-east of Port Essington, English or Pidgin English competence gradually increased as the British garrison became closer. This competence was expressed in a progressive reduction in the use of the 'Macassan' Pidgin and a corresponding increase in the use of the Pidgin English.

This evidence suggests that what was taking place at Port Essington, as a consequence of contact with the English language, was a gradual relexification of the 'Macassan' Pidgin towards an English-based Pidgin. There was clearly differential command of an English-based pidgin by Aboriginal people of the Port Essington region, depending on their degree of contact with the settlement. Those with minimal contact with the Europeans spoke a mixture of the 'Macassan' Pidgin and Pidgin English while those with more contact spoke Pidgin English. If this relexification is what in fact occurred, then it is not unreasonable to postulate the following language relationships, connecting Port Essington Pidgin English with the 'Macassan' Pidgin and its antecedents.

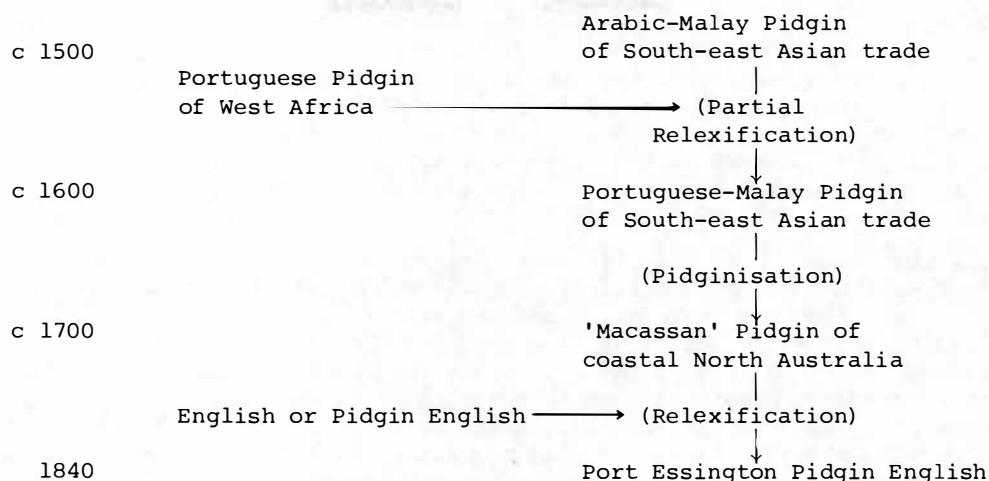


Figure 8: Possible Lexical sources of the 'Macassan' Pidgin and Port Essington Pidgin English

It is certainly not being argued that the monogenetic or relexification theory should be resurrected. To see all pidgins and creoles as deriving from a common ancestry in the *Lingua Franca* of the Mediterranean was no doubt an impossible dream, but historical relationships such as the one argued above demonstrate that although the vision, as a total entity, may have been discredited, its after-image lives on in the discovery of yet another example of the intricate and far-reaching linguistic consequences of European colonial and commercial activity.

How many Pidgin Englishes were there?

This is a difficult question but one which cannot be ignored. It is a question which Mühlhäusler (1983) has recently asked with respect to the Pacific and found impossible to answer. This impossibility is partly due to the fact that the degree of linguistic precision which is necessary in determining and assessing the criteria by which separate languages can be distinguished has not even been adequately achieved in discriminating between fully-fledged languages and is therefore even less likely to be attained in the case of pidgins (Mühlhäusler 1983b:24).

Among those criteria which might be considered the most obvious distinguishing features of pidgins, Mühlhäusler (pp.1-3) has found location, speakers, and name to be particularly unreliable. Mühlhäusler furthermore argues that in tracing the historical development of the Pacific Pidgin Englishes, linguistic continuity cannot be assumed. Identity of a pidgin over time is a shaky notion, at best. Even some of the more obvious similarities between some pidgins are not particularly useful in determining genetic relationships because although they may indicate shared history, they may also indicate universal processes of pidginisation or contact with similar languages or later borrowings. Mühlhäusler (p.27) calls for the development of a set of reasonable criteria for pidgin identification, classification, and comparison – and certainly such a set of criteria would be useful.

Mühlhäusler (1983b), also makes the important observation that within the Pacific region, convergent development has probably been more important than divergent development. In other words, pidgins began in various places but were also transported from place to place so that the very movement which spawned them also prevented their divergence and ensured a sufficient commonality of speakers so that the pidgins tended to develop in parallel in a convergent manner rather than to become more independent, divergent and distinctive.

This situation which Mühlhäusler considers to be true of the Pacific pidgins is also true of the Northern Territory pidgins which are also in a sense Pacific pidgins and which are certainly connected with them in a number of ways. The overriding impression one gains from studying the examples of Northern Territory Pidgin English so far located is that by the beginning of this century, the same pidgin was spoken throughout the whole of the Top End. If, for example, one examines the court cases recorded in Borroloola in 1902 by Spencer (1928) and in Darwin in 1913 by Masson (1915) and the various examples of Pidgin English recorded around the north coast in the 1880s by Searcy (1912) and at Elsey Station in 1902 by Gunn (1905), one gains the distinct impression that one is dealing with the same language. By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of the Northern Territory was becoming increasingly mobile, itself a factor in the convergence of the pidgins and it certainly appears that despite this mobility, there was no particular barrier to communication.

This does not mean that there was no regional variation. There is clear evidence of lexical variation and of lexical change. The most predictable sources of lexical variation were the substrate Aboriginal languages. These variations were normally of a very local nature and are treated in more detail in the next chapter.

Lexical change also occurred over time, a phenomenon which should be expected to occur if convergence is in fact taking place, for what else is convergence but the loss of local idiosyncratic terminology and syntax and the adoption of widely accepted and widely understood forms. Tum-tum, for example, seems to have disappeared from the Darwin region by the turn of the century, being replaced by the universally accepted tucker. Another example of such a lexical change is the loss of the word yabber which has disappeared in favour of talk, tell or say. Yabber was a common word, standing alone or in combinations like yabber-stick *Aboriginal message stick* or paper-yabber *letter or telegram*.

Him bin yabber another fella blackfella long way.
(Searcy 1912:173)

My word, Jimmy! You plenty savey. Me no more savey yabber
stick. I think you close up savey whitefellow paper-yabber,
Jimmy. (Gunn 1905:54-55)

There is no word in present-day Kriol which is derived from yabber and none of the older Aboriginal informants know or remember the word. This is strange because the word appears to have been in widespread use in the early years of this century.

As noted, there was, by the end of the nineteenth century, considerably increased mobility. Aboriginal people often accompanied Europeans to places far from their own country. Many Aborigines were sentenced to periods in Darwin's Fanny Bay Gaol where they mixed with people from many other parts of

the Northern Territory. Europeans were also mobile. Stockmen moved from station to station seeking better employment, policemen spent time in different postings around the Northern Territory, and Government officials of various kinds moved around a great deal. These people were the carriers of the pidgin, dropping its local idiosyncrasies when necessary and preserving its commonalities.

A typical example was Lionel Gee, government surveyor, goldfield warden and magistrate, who in his various roles travelled extensively in the Northern Territory in the first decade or so of this century and who recorded his reminiscences in a book (Gee 1926).

Gee recorded many conversations with Aboriginal people from the far south of the Northern Territory, through the Centre and Top End and around the coast. He utilised what were obviously local words at times, such as *wea boy* and *quea girl* around Central Australia (Gee 1926:6) but he was nevertheless well able to communicate all over the Territory and he even wrote down instructions on how to speak Pidgin English (Gee 1926:15-16. See Appendix C). His perception was that the pidgin, although using mostly English words was not semantically English.

... though the words used are quite English, some of them are put in such a different sense that it takes a little time before a new chum can get the hang of them and talk understandably with his black brother. (Gee 1926:15)

Not only was Gee able to utilise Pidgin English wherever he went, he and people like him were responsible for its convergence towards common standards.

For all these reasons stated it is not possible to answer explicitly the question of how many Pidgin Englishes there were in the Northern Territory. The most reasonable statement would be to say that Pidgin Englishes arose at various times in various places but that they had common features which facilitated their parallel convergence into one widely understood *lingua franca*, Northern Territory Pidgin English. This statement will be more clearly understood in the light of the next chapter, which provides a detailed analysis and discussion of its lexicon.

CHAPTER 10

THE LEXICON OF NORTHERN TERRITORY PIDGIN ENGLISH

Historical approaches

As Northern Territory Pidgin English was an English-based pidgin, its major lexical source was ultimately the English language itself. This, however, is far too simple a statement because its immediate lexical source or sources were not necessarily Standard English at all, but were more likely to have been existing Pidgin Englishes, such as South-eastern Australian Pidgin English or Chinese Pidgin English, both of which can be shown to have been used in the Northern Territory.

There are basically only two lines of evidence which can be followed in tracing the immediate lexical sources of Northern Territory Pidgin English. The first method is historical but essentially circumstantial — that is, one can seek out and examine the kind of historical information which has been gathered together in Chapters 4 to 7 and try to answer questions such as who spoke to whom and when did they speak and what did they say. As has been shown already, such questions are not always easy to answer, and sometimes even the best answers are only conjectures. There is, despite this, a great deal of valuable historical information, the major aspects of which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The second method is to study the lexicon itself, comparing it with the lexicons of other pidgins which might have been used in speaking to Northern Territory Aboriginal people and thus could have been target languages or lexical sources. For this purpose, the bulk of the lexicon is not probative, having been recorded as if it was identical with English. As Dutton (1983:91) points out, wherever there are no apparent differences, the data are ambiguous and cannot be invoked to make claims about Aboriginal Pidgin English. In order to find evidence of connections with other pidgins, it is necessary to examine only those features which are innovations relative to standard English. If we take, for example, the following Pidgin English sentence

Milk close up finissem. (Gunn 1905:95)

The word milk may have come directly from English or it may have been presented initially as part of pre-existing pidgin in the early contact between Europeans and Aborigines or, most likely, it may have been a late borrowing inserted into the Elsey Station pidgin by a European speaking the pidgin. It is not possible to determine the origin of the word, so in any historical or comparative research, it is useless.

On the other hand, the sentence contains two innovations with respect to standard English — the use of close up as a verb modifier and the use of verb + em as a verb form. There are only two possible sources of these features. They were either presented as non-standard English features in a pidginised or modified form of English first used by the Europeans in communicating with Aborigines in the Elsey station region or they were the result of the pidginisation of standard English by those Aboriginal people themselves.

If, to use the same examples, close up or verb + em can be shown to have been present in the pidgins of southern Australia or in Chinese Pidgin English, then these pidgins must be probable sources of those features in Northern Territory pidgins. This is not to deny the real possibility of universal processes of pidginisation producing identical features in separate situations but the presence in Northern Territory Pidgin English of features found in a pre-existing pidgin which can be shown to have been used in communication with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, indicates that that pidgin was a highly probable source of those features.

Clark's analysis of Pacific pidgins

In researching the historical connections between Pidgin Englishes of the Pacific region, Clark has produced a list of distinctive features from Pacific pidgins which are innovatory with respect to Standard English and can therefore be used for comparative purposes. Most of these features are discussed in Clark (1979), but a few additional features are added in Clark (1983). Many of these comparative features were present in Northern Territory Pidgin English, and so they provide a useful starting point for a consideration of historical linguistic relationships and therefore of lexical sources.

Clark lists a total of thirty-two comparative features. Clark (1979:19) groups these lexical items into four broad distribution classes which he terms World, Sino-Pacific, Southwestern, and Melanesian. The distribution and features of each class are given in Table 8 on page 262, while the nature of each feature is given in Table 10 (page 268).

In order to use these features to determine if there is any connection between Pacific pidgins and Northern Territory pidgins, it is necessary to outline briefly the origin and relationship of Pacific pidgins as Clark researched them.

Records of European exploration of the Pacific indicate that until the late eighteenth century, there was no real opportunity for English-based pidgins to develop.

Although European exploration of the Pacific technically began with Magellan, contact with islanders was extremely rare and brief during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, however, with the voyages of Byron, Wallis, Cook, Bougainville, and others, the Pacific map was rapidly filled with islands and the way was opened for European entry on a large scale. (Clark 1983:11)

Table 8: Distribution of comparative features of Pacific Pidgins according to Clark (1979; 1983)		
CLASS	DISTRIBUTION	FEATURES
World	Features shared by Pacific pidgins with English-based pidgins and creoles elsewhere in the world	along (1), been, by and by, got ('have'), him, piccaninny, plenty, savvy, something, suppose, too much, where
Sino-Pacific	Features found in Chinese Pidgin English and most South Pacific pidgins but not elsewhere	all same, catch, stop
Southwestern	Features shared by the Melanesian pidgins and Australian creoles, but not found elsewhere	all (1), all together, along (2), belong, bullamacow, fellow (1), fellow (2), he, kaikai, kill, pigeon, what name, you me
Melanesian	Features not found outside the Melanesian group	all (2), man bush

As Clark (1979:24-28) points out, the initial communications consisted of dumb barter and pantomime, but early accounts indicate that by the end of the eighteenth century, some linguistic communication had become possible. A small corpus of Polynesian words appears to have been in circulation among the European explorers and, as islanders were sometimes taken on voyages, there was an increasing frequency of accounts of islanders here and there with some command of 'broken English'.

An important observation which Clark makes is that such people could be thought of as 'the end points of a linguistic community whose primary locus was at sea' (1979:28). There was a great increase in maritime traffic in the South Pacific in the early years of the nineteenth century, most of the ships being American-owned whalers. Hohman's discussion (1928:48-57) of the composition of the crews of these ships indicates that they were of mixed ethnic and linguistic origin, including American Negroes, Portuguese, other Europeans of various nationalities, South-east Asians, Peruvians, American Indians and Pacific Islanders. There would, of course have been a need for some kind of ship-board jargon under such circumstances. The existence of a seventeenth and eighteenth century English-based nautical jargon has often been suggested and, furthermore, assumed to have a connection with some English-based coastal pidgins (e.g. Reinecke 1938:107; Todd 1974:32). Despite the existence of formal studies of 'sailors' talk' such as Matthew (1935), Clark cautions both against reifying the supposed universal properties of the hypothetical nautical

jargon and against confusing it with the seaboard pidgins in whose history the supposed nautical jargons are said to have had some part (Clark 1979:60n22).

On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to argue that once a fixed, land-based community becomes part of the nautical speech community, some stability over time becomes enforced. Thus, by the 1830s, in the South Pacific, a number of distinctive conventions become recognisable in the recorded examples of communication between Europeans and Islanders to the extent that Clark (1979:34-35) feels justified in describing some of its key aspects and in labelling it the *South Seas Jargon*. It is Clark's view that it was indeed a jargon in the sense in which that term has been defined earlier in this study (see page 12). It was 'fairly low on the scale of pidgin evolution, with a very limited vocabulary, minimal grammatical resources, and a high degree of variability' (Clark 1983:15) but, as noted earlier, a jargon cannot be totally individualistic. There must be some kind of agreement, however loose, that certain lexical items bear certain meanings, or else communication would be impossible. Clark (p.14) shows that 'a number of grammatical and lexical features occur in examples of South Seas Jargon from a sufficiently wide range of sources to justify the belief that the language was not simply a series of local ad hoc systems but that it possessed a continuity of tradition throughout the region and the period'.

These lexical items include the World features along (1), by and by, been, piccaninny, plenty, savvy, suppose and too much, the Sino-Pacific feature all same and the Southwestern features bullamacow and kaikai. Although not strictly used as comparative features by Clark, the South Seas Jargon also typically included the contrasting pair very good and no good.

The South Seas Jargon, according to Clark's analysis, formed the basis of all subsequent pidgins and creoles which developed in the Pacific region. 'Mixed macaronically with more or less pidginized forms of the local vernacular' it is represented in jargons such as the hapa haole of early nineteenth century Hawaii, 'Maori Pidgin English' and 'Micronesian Pidgin' (Clark 1979:47). Clark also regards the South Seas Jargon as an important early lexical source of what he terms 'Australian Aboriginal Pidgin' (p.47).

One important expansion of the South Seas Jargon occurred as a result of more sustained contact between Europeans and the people of the islands of southern Melanesia such as the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. These contacts were for the purpose of trading in sandalwood and trepang (bêche-de-mer), so that the pidgin which became associated with that era was frequently referred to by such titles as 'Sandalwood English' and 'Beach-la-Mar' (Clark 1977, 1978, 1979, 1983). By 1865, 'Sandalwood English' had achieved stability as a pidgin. Lexically, its continuity with the South Seas Jargon is seen in its possession of the lexical features noted above as typical of the jargon. Although there was expansion of the lexicon, only a few new items of value for comparative purposes appear in it. These include the Southwestern features belong and he and the Melanesian features all (2) and man bush.

As Clark (1983:20) points out, 'Sandalwood English' may well have died out with the demise of the sandalwood, whaling and trepang industries, had it not been that this coincided with the establishment of commercial sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji. Cheap labour was required in quite large numbers, and as neither Europeans nor local inhabitants would do the work, labourers were recruited from those places where 'Sandalwood English' was already in wide use as a pidgin.

Responding to the pressure of new demands, this pidgin underwent rapid expansion. With respect to features having comparative value, it retained those features already noted as typical of the South Seas Jargon and of 'Sandalwood English', adding a number of new and distinctive features. These include the World feature *him*, the Sino-Pacific feature *stop* and the Southwestern features all together, along (2), fellow (1), kill, pigeon and what name.

By the 1870s, Clark considers the expanded pidgin to have become sufficiently distinctive as to be able to term it Early Melanesian Pidgin. According to Clark, this pidgin was the forerunner of all significant modern Pacific and Australian creoles.

... 'Sandalwood English' or 'Beche-de-Mer English', was widely used between Europeans and Melanesians in New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands and the New Hebrides, and probably also between Melanesians from different areas (though direct evidence of this is lacking). In the 1860s it was taken to the plantations of Queensland and Fiji by Melanesian indentured labourers, and there underwent a period of rapid development. By the 1870s it can be recognized as an early form of Melanesian pidgin. During the sandalwood and early labour trade periods there appears to have been a significant influence from Australian Aboriginal pidgin.

Labourers from the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands took this early Melanesian pidgin to Samoa in the late 1870s, where it was learned by men from New Britain and New Ireland. Later, under conditions of relative isolation, New Guinea Pidgin developed its somewhat distinctive lexicon and structure. Pidgin had spread to the Torres Straits region from southern Melanesia as early as 1860s, first via pearling ships, and later by various other routes. Cape York Creole is a result of this long-term movement. Pidgin from the Queensland plantations was also carried by stockmen into the Northern Territory, where it merged with the existing Aboriginal pidgin to form the basis of the modern Roper River Creole.
(Clark 1979:49)

In the table reproduced on page 265 (Table 9), Clark correlates the comparative and documentary evidence he gathered for his important 1979 paper.

The nature and reliability of the Northern Territory lexical data¹³⁶

This lexical study is of all English-based pidgins spoken between Europeans and Aborigines in the Top End of the Northern Territory from 1827 to the beginnings of creolisation in the Roper River region by 1910. The Appendices give, in full, all examples of English-based pidgin speech in the Northern Territory which I have thus far located in literature relating to the period. Although it is hoped that further research may locate more examples, at present there is little known material prior to 1880. Recorded examples, even after 1880, are

Table 9: Pacific Pidgins: Correlation of comparative and documentary evidence. (Reproduced from Clark 1979:44).

EARLIEST OCCURRENCE	DISTRIBUTIONAL CATEGORY			
	WORLD	SINO-PACIFIC	SOUTHWESTERN	MELANESIAN
South Seas Jargon (before 1865)	along(1), savvy, been, suppose, by and by, too much, piccaninny, plenty	all same, got? stop?	bullamacow, kaikai	
Sandalwood English (1840-1865)			along(2)? belong, he, pigeon	all(2) man bush
Early Melanesian Pidgin (1866-1878)	him	stop	all together, along(2), fellow(1), kill, pigeon, what name	
Later	something, where	catch, got	fellow(2), you me, all(1)	

far from copious, but there is certainly a more adequate range, particularly in the writings of Searcy (1909, 1912) in reference to the 1880s and Gunn (1905, 1908) in reference to 1902.¹³⁷

The use of these early records presents the researcher with some problems. The records were written by Europeans who were explorers, government officials, settlers, naval officers and even tourists but none of them were linguists in the modern sense of the term. More importantly, none were Aborigines. As Clark (1979:23) comments, it may well be objected that the materials they recorded were largely creatures of a European imagination, conventionalised ideas of native uses of jargonised English with little basis in reality. Certainly it has been claimed by scholars such as Bickerton and Odo (1976:13) that there was 'comic-book stereotyping of non-standard varieties' already rife amongst nineteenth century authors. As recently as 1944, Sayer (p. 26) was writing advice on how to use Pidgin English for local colour in fiction writing. This is, however, not necessarily a problem in this case. As Clark argued with respect to his research,

First, the authors are writing works of non-fiction, describing events they have personally experienced.
(There would be much more reason to expect an inauthentic, stereotyped pidgin from the writers of fictional South Seas adventure yarns, who might never have left England

or America.) While they undoubtedly use pidgin quotations to add colour to their narratives, it is hard to see what motive they would have for falsifying its structure, unless one were to maintain that all the natives were in fact speaking standard English. Second, there is a reasonable consistency from writer to writer in a given area and period, rather than a wild jumble of imagined pseudo-pidgins. (Clark 1979:23)

It is quite important to note that in the Northern Territory literature, one does not find the insertion of pidgin features from elsewhere. In fact, those writers who record examples of pidgins other than Aboriginal Pidgin English go to considerable effort to distinguish the pidgins. This is particularly evident with respect to Chinese Pidgin English, which was in wide use in the Northern Territory during the era of major development of Aboriginal Pidgin English

SOWDEN:

(Aboriginal Boy) No savee ... what fellow make him ... cause I tink him too muchee big fellow fool. (1882:110)

(Chinese Man) Allee yight. Me tlink ten tousan' Chineer longa Tellitoly two t'lee year. We make nish place allee same Singapo. (1882:70)

SEARCY:

(Aboriginal Man) Captain, you like to see way blackfellow catchem fish, no line, no more spear. Alright, we been go longa jungle first time. (1912:87)

(Chinese Man) You makee write chit along steamer, wharfy go look see one piece blanket all samee from flend ... (1912:121)

It is also noteworthy that there are wide variations in spelling, not only from one writer to another, but even in the same writer. This suggests that the writers were indeed trying to record speech they had actually heard, rather than emulating some stylised or stereotyped literary convention. In the following pairs of quotations, the spelling variants are underlined.

White fellow no savee. (Parkhouse 1895:640)

(Blackfellow) him sabe. (Parkhouse 1895:647)

I see one fellow proa. (Searcy 1909:91)

... strong pfeller alligator. (Searcy 1909:270)

It seems reasonable to accept that these quotations represent genuine attempts on the part of the writers to record actual speech.¹³⁸ As well they are the only direct evidence we can ever hope to have. At this juncture, Clark's conclusions about his South Pacific sources are apt.

I shall therefore take these quotations seriously as representations of the sort of language in use between Europeans and natives at the time and place of writing, though not necessarily of the exact words spoken on a particular occasion. Naturally, various limitations must be allowed for. Pronunciation is only sporadically

indicated, by ad hoc modifications of English orthography. Grammatical errors are inevitable, as a result of the writer's imperfect grasp of the rules of the pidgin (or failure to perceive that it had any). There is also, particularly in longer texts, a tendency to drift into standard English, either from the same lack of competence, or because long stretches of real pidgin would be too hard for the reader to understand. A short utterance is more likely to have been accurately remembered and noted down. (Clark 1979:24)

The researcher is nevertheless obliged to recognise the limitations of the data and to make allowances wherever necessary. As Dutton (1983:91) advises, the researcher can only proceed

... firstly by presenting as much of the data so far collected as possible, and secondly, by presenting them in the context in which they occurred. (Dutton 1983:91)

I have striven to adopt this procedure. The Appendices record all data from all sources thus far located while Chapters 4 to 9 provide as detailed a sociohistorical perspective as possible. It now remains to analyse it all.

Clark's comparative features in the Northern Territory lexicon

It was demonstrated in the historical sections of this study that there was some regular use of English in contacts between English-speaking Europeans and Northern Territory Aborigines from about 1827 onwards. There is, within that period, evidence of the emergence of an English-based pidgin in the 1840s at Port Essington. From 1850 onwards, the limited European presence meant that there was no further development for about 20 years. With the possible exception of the short lived settlement at Escape Cliffs from 1864 to 1866, there was no site where a pidgin could develop until the beginnings of Darwin in 1869, from which time the development of Northern Territory Pidgin English was unbroken.

Clark's comparative features of South Pacific pidgins and their distribution classes form a useful initial framework for analysing the lexicon of the Northern Territory pidgins. The data is summarised in the three tables which follow. Table 10 lists those comparative features, giving a description of each feature and, where a record has been found, an example from the Northern Territory of its use.¹³⁹ Table 11 lists the earliest occurrences of each feature in literature relating to the Northern Territory. Table 12 groups the features found in the Northern Territory according to both their distribution classes and the decade of the earliest known record. In all the tables and in the analysis and discussion which follow, all references to Northern Territory pidgin are to recorded examples prior to 1910. All references to Kriol are to Kriol as spoken in the Northern Territory and in particular in the Roper River region.

Table 10: Pacific Pidgin English Comparative Features with Northern Territory Examples

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	N.T. EXAMPLE
all (1)	Pronoun. Third person plural. In NT always found as all about.	Him bin killem all about (Searcy 1912:176)
all (2)	Plural marker preceding noun. Only found in NT pidgin as all about.	Him take all about tucker (Searcy 1912:191)
all same	Preposition – <i>like, the same as</i> .	My word, all same chinaman (Searcy 1912:165)
all together	Quantifier, preceding nouns – Not recorded in NT. Probably equivalent to all about as in all (2) above.	
along (1)	Preposition – <i>with</i> . Longa in later NT examples.	... s'pose you no more make me whitefellow longa paint (Gunn 1905:20)
along (2)	Preposition – <i>to, at, from</i> etc. Longa in later NT examples.	I bin lendem longa Timbuk (Kelsey 1975:76)
been	Verb marker, past or anterior tense, preceding verb.	Blackfellow smoke bin talk (Gunn 1905:67)
belong	Preposition, genitive.	Which way you bin put him egg belonga crocodile (Gunn 1905:65)
bullamacow	Noun – <i>bull, cow</i> . Not found in NT.	
by and by	Future tense marker	By-and-by him catch him lubra (Parkhouse 1895:64)
catch	Verb – <i>get, obtain, receive</i> him bin catchem tobacco all about (Searcy 1912:156)
fellow (1)	Suffix to pre-nominal modifiers.	... him too much big fellow fool (Sowden 1882:110)

Table 10 *continued* ...

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	N.T. EXAMPLE
fellow (2)	Plural suffix in personal pronouns. Found extensively in modern Kriol. Possibly already in the pidgin.	Two fellow been go self longa crossing. (Spencer 1928:591)
got	Verb — <i>have</i> me bin gotem (Searcy 1912:237)
he	Predicate marker. Not recorded in NT pidgin.	
him	Transitive suffix to verbs. Written as -em by many writers.	... alligator alonga creek killem horse (Searcy 1912:73)
kaikai	Verb — <i>eat</i> and noun <i>food</i> . Not found in NT pidgins.	
kill	Verb — <i>hit</i> .	Bett-Bett bin kill me ... (Gunn 1905:52)
no good	Adjective — <i>bad</i> .	You no bread ... you no good (Leichhardt 1847:523)
man bush	Noun compound, used by Clark (1979:17) as cover term for all noun-noun compounds where modifier follows lead. Not found in NT pidgin.	
piccaninny	Noun — <i>child</i>	Whitefellow chuck 'em water longa piccaninny (Gunn 1905:90)
pigeon	Noun — <i>bird</i> . Not found in NT pidgin.	
plenty	Quantifier, preceding noun — <i>much, many</i> .	Plenty big fellow noise (Searcy 1912:176)
savvy	Verb — <i>know, understand</i> .	Whitefellow no savee (Parkhouse 1895:640)
something	Noun — <i>thing</i> . Not recorded in NT pidgin.	

Table 10 *continued* ...

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	N.T. EXAMPLE
stop	Verb – <i>be</i> . Not found in NT pidgins in which equivalent is sit down.	
suppose	Conjunction and conditional marker – <i>if</i> .	S'pose me look, Debbil-Debbil take away eye (Gunn 1905:16)
too much	Adverb – <i>very, very much</i> .	You too muchee little fellow, Missus (Gunn 1905:19)
very good	Adjective – <i>good</i> .	Balanda plenty bread ... Balanda very good (Leichhardt 1847:523)
what name	Interrogative pronoun – <i>what, which</i> what name him bin do first time? (Spencer 1928:591)
where	Relative clause marker. Not recorded in NT pidgins but used by older Kriol speakers.	
you me	Pronoun. First person dual inclusive. Kriol has <i>yunmi</i> . Possibly already in the pidgin.	Him say you and me go longa Price potato. (Spencer 1928:591)

Table 11: Earliest Recorded Examples of Comparative Features in Northern Territory Pidgins			
COMPARATIVE FEATURE	EARLIEST RECORD IN NT LITERATURE		OTHER RECORDED INSTANCES IN NT LITERATURE
	DATE	SOURCE	
all (1)	1882	Sowden 1882:144	1884-1886 (Searcy 1912) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
all (2)	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:191	1902 (Gunn 1908)
all same	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:23	1895 (Willshire 1896) , 1902 (Spencer 1928)
all together	-	-	-
along (1)	1902	Gunn 1905:20	
along (2)	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:70	1888 (Kelsey 1975) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
been	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:104	1888 (Kelsey 1975) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
belong	1902	Gunn 1905:65	
bullamacow	-	-	-
by and by	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:75	1890 (Parkhouse 1895a) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
catch	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:156	1890 (Parkhouse 1895a) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
fellow (1)	1882	Sowden 1882:110	1882-1886 (Searcy 1912) , 1902 (Gunn 1905)
fellow (2)	1902	Spencer 1928:591	-
got	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:237	-
he	-	-	-
him	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:53	1888 (Kelsey 1975) , 1895 (Willshire 1896)
kaikai	-	-	-
kill	1882- 1886	Searcy 1912:55	1902 (Gunn 1905)
no good	1844	Leichhardt 1847:495	1882-1886 (Searcy 1912)

Table 11 *continued* ...

COMPARATIVE FEATURE	EARLIEST RECORD IN NT LITERATURE		OTHER RECORDED INSTANCES IN NT LITERATURE
	DATE	SOURCE	
man bush	-	-	-
piccaninny	1843	Sibbald 1843:(7)	1872 (May 1872), 1882-1886 (Searcy 1912)
pigeon	-	-	-
plenty	1844	Leichhardt 1847:523	1882-1886 (Searcy 1912), 1902 (Gunn 1905)
savvy	1882	Sowden 1882:144	1890 (Parkhouse 1895a), 1902 (Gunn 1905)
something	-	-	-
stop	-	-	-
suppose	1890	Parkhouse 1895a:647	1902 (Gunn 1905)
too much	1882	Sowden 1882:110	1902 (Gunn 1905), Searcy (1912)
very good	1844	Leichhardt 1847:495	1870 (Daly 1887)
what name	1902	Gunn 1905:25	1902 (Spencer 1928)
where	-	-	-
you me	1902	Spencer 1928:591	-

Table 12: Occurrence of Pacific comparative features in Northern Territory by decade of earliest known record up to 1910				
EARLIEST OCCURRENCE IN N.T. LITERATURE	DISTRIBUTION CLASS			
	WORLD	SINO-PACIFIC	SOUTHWESTERN	MELANESIAN
Pre-1840	piccaninny?		fellow (1)?	
1840s	plenty piccaninny		no good very good	
1850s				
1860s				
1870s				
1880s	savvy too much been by and by got him	all same catch	all (1) fellow (1) along (2) kill	
1890s	suppose		belong	
1900-1910	along (1)		fellow (2)? what name you me?	
Not found	something where?	stop	all together he bullamacow kaikai pigeon	all (2) man bush

Lexical data prior to 1870

No unquestionable lexical items of value for comparative purposes have been located in the literature prior to the 1840s. This was, of course, only to be expected. No pidgin developed on Melville Island when the British garrison was stationed there from 1824 to 1829. There was some verbal communication at Raffles Bay between 1827 and 1829, as discussed in Chapter 5. It included the use of both English and Aboriginal words and may have been analogous to the kind of 'macaronic jargon' which Clark (1979:33) describes as having had currency in the same era in the South Pacific, with a mixture of English and local linguistic elements and alternation between them. Apart from proper names, the only definitely recorded English-based lexical items are *commandant*, *commissar*, *pig* and, possibly, *bread* (see pages 132-133). The first two are names of specific military posts and, in accordance with established military tradition, were used in lieu of proper names and were no doubt learnt as such by the local Aboriginal people. The other two words label new concepts of interest to the local people. There is no reason to presume any significance beyond their local use.

There are two words found in the literature relating to the 1820s which do form part of Clark's list of comparative features, but it is not possible to assign them unequivocally to any pidgin or jargon in use in the region. The word *piccaninny* was recorded on Melville Island in 1827 (see page 117), but it was part of the vocabulary of a Melville Islander and not part of a developing pidgin. The possibility of its connections with Portuguese or a Portuguese-based pidgin has been discussed earlier in this study. It is not, short of the unlikely prospect of the discovery of further information, possible to know whether this word was known beyond Melville Island and if so, whether or not it entered later English-based pidgins via that substrate or via another route. It is, however, one of Clark's World features and conceivably could have entered the later Northern Territory pidgins via a number of possible routes.

Of even more difficult interpretation is Wilson's use (1835:121) of the term *white fellow* in reference to Raffles Bay in 1829. It is not possible to determine whether or not the use of *fellow* by Wilson indicates that it had currency at Raffles Bay. The word *fellow* (1) is one of Clark's comparative features which he places in the Southwestern distribution class (Clark 1979:21). It was clearly in use in Aboriginal pidgins in south-eastern Australia long before it entered any Pacific pidgins (Clark 1979:43). A number of examples of its use between 1828 and 1832 in south-eastern Australia have been collected by Ramson (1966:109-112).

Wilson, therefore, could simply have been using the word descriptively for literary effect although it seems less likely, in a book not specifically produced for the small Australian market, that he should have elected to use it unless it was also used in the combinations *blackfellow* and *whitefellow* to label the two cultural groups at Raffles Bay.

In the 1840s, during the decade of the British garrison at Port Essington, there is no doubt that an English-based pidgin was spoken. The evidence for this assertion has been fully detailed in Chapter 5. We are indebted to Leichhardt (1847) for the few examples of connected speech actually recorded on the occasion of their use which have thus far been located in the literature relating to that era. They all form part of Leichhardt's journal of his approach to Port Essington in 1844, and it is indeed a pity that once he found

he was able to communicate readily with the Aboriginal people whom he encountered, he no longer found it relevant to record the conversations as he had done at first out of 'joy when English words were heard again' (Leichhardt 1846:32). Among the twenty odd lexical items recorded by Leichhardt, there is only one which is found among Clark's Pacific comparative features. This item, plenty, is one which Clark places in the World distribution class because of its wide currency worldwide in English-based pidgins and creoles. It is therefore of limited value in any historical analysis as it was almost certainly part of such communicative devices as the nineteenth century 'foreigner talk' register and the hypothetical nautical jargon. It was also, however, part of the South Seas Jargon of that era (see Table 9) and in use in south-eastern Australia (Clark 1979:42), both of which indicate that these pre-existing pidgins were likely to have been the speech models presented by Port Essington Europeans to the local people. This view is further strengthened by the occurrence of the pair very good and no good in Leichhardt's records which, although not strictly comparative features, were, according to Clark (1979:32), typical of the South Seas Jargon and of the Southeastern Australian Pidgin.¹⁴⁰ Strong circumstantial evidence of the likelihood of the influence of these languages on the developing Port Essington pidgin is found in the fact that the majority of the marines who comprised the garrison were brought from Sydney (see page 136). Not only was Sydney the original and obvious site of the major development of the early Southeastern Australian Aboriginal Pidgin English, it was also a major port for South Pacific trade and a site where both the South Seas Jargon and the Southeastern Australian Pidgin were not only well known but no doubt also influenced each other. The matter will be discussed in more detail later in this section. Even those members of the garrison who only passed through Sydney, having more or less come directly from England, had in fact spent nine months on board ship where exposure to some variant of the South Seas Jargon or a related nineteenth century nautical jargon was probable. The crews were not necessarily military or naval personnel, and they were certainly not exclusively English or even European. Sibbald (1843:[8]), for example, noted that there was a 'black servant, an African' on *H.M.S. Fly*.

The only other English lexical item of possible comparative value in Leichhardt's journals is his repeated references to the phrase, 'What's your name' (1846:32; 1847:502). Leichhardt obviously took the phrase to have its normal English meaning. There is, however, an alternative and, in many ways, more likely explanation which is that it could be an early occurrence of the pidgin item *what name*. It is one of Clark's comparative features and grouped by him with the Southwestern distribution class of items peculiar to Australia and the south-west Pacific. According to Clark, the earliest record of *what name* in Pacific literature is in the 1870s (1979:39-40) and he sees it entering the Pacific pidgin milieu at about that time as part of what he terms Early Melanesian Pidgin. There is, however, no reason to presume that the item could not have entered the Pacific pidgins from Australia.

As shown in Table 10, the item *what name* was later used as a general purpose interrogative pronoun in contexts in which the English interrogative pronouns *what* or *which* might have been expected. It is not difficult to propose a likely origin for *what name*. Europeans or at least English-speaking Europeans always want to know other people's names. This is in strict contrast to the Aboriginal code of behaviour by which it is impolite to ask a person his or her name. Even today I have frequently observed how much more overtly curious visiting Europeans are about Aboriginal people's names than Aboriginal people

are about their names.¹⁴¹ It is certainly highly probable that in many initial contact situations between European and Aboriginal people, the first question asked of an Aboriginal person would be, 'What's your name?' It is, furthermore, also quite likely that Aboriginal people would interpret such a question as some kind of expression of curiosity, perhaps concerning the kinds of things about which they themselves would be curious. It could, in any case, have been used in such expressions of curiosity as 'what's the name of X?' meaning 'what do you call X?' or 'what's X?'. Thus the phrase what name became, in the pidgin, a general expression of curiosity. It was certainly so used in the later Northern Territory Pidgin (see, for example, Spencer 1928 [1902]:591; Gunn 1905:25). Nevertheless, this possible origin of what name is, at this juncture, somewhat speculative and no doubt the same arguments could be applied to various other parts of the Pacific. Given, however, the fact that some features of Melanesian Pidgin English can be shown to have originated in Australia (Clark 1979:43) and given also that what name was certainly part of Northern Territory pidgin, it is not unreasonable to speculate that Leichhardt observed an early instance of its use. In the context in which it was said, the word commandant had already been used as a name, as it habitually was at both Raffles Bay and Port Essington. It is possible to argue that to call Leichhardt commandant and then to ask his name would have been redundant. This argument may be less convincing if one regards commandant as an occupational title, although it is questionable whether Aborigines would have so regarded it.

Among the few words recorded by others at Port Essington (see Appendix A), none are of value in an historical analysis. There is, however, a reference in the journal of Alexander Sibbald to the use of the term piccaninny,¹⁴² although it is not recorded in connected speech.

... they gave me some of the bones of the neck, to take as
a present to my 'piccaninny' in England
(Sibbald 1843:[7])

As shown above, piccaninny is one of Clark's comparative features, a member of the World distribution class and therefore, alone of limited value. As discussed earlier, the word piccaninny was known on Melville Island before any English-speaking settlement and may therefore have been known at Port Essington. It would also have formed part of virtually any imaginable nineteenth century English-based pidgin of which the members of the Port Essington garrison had any prior experience or knowledge. Its presence at Port Essington is hardly surprising and is further evidence of its universality, but it is that very universality which reduces its value for historical comparative purposes.

Between 1850 and 1864, there was no significant European presence in the Northern Territory. As shown in Chapter 5, it is clear that there was some verbal communication between Europeans and Aborigines at Escape Cliffs between 1864 and 1866, even perhaps an embryonic pidgin. No words have been located in the literature relating to that period. If the handful of words recorded by Harriet Douglas (Daly 1887:41-42) at Escape Cliffs a few years later can be taken to be a sample of lexical items in use at Escape Cliffs, then the pidgin included at least the feature very good, which although not strictly one of Clark's comparative features, is one which he found to be typical of the Pacific pidgin (Sandalwood English) of the era 1830-1865. No conclusions can be drawn from this meagre data other than that the kind of English presented to

Escape Cliffs Aboriginal people by the European settlers was highly likely to have been influenced by existing pidgins with which they were already familiar.

In summary, it must be conceded that the data available for discussion of English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory prior to 1870 is sparse indeed. Consequently, it is necessary to exercise extreme caution in drawing any conclusions from it. The few definitely recorded words which are potentially useful for the purposes of comparison are plenty, piccaninny, very good and no good. The first two of these are of universal distribution whereas the second two are typical of both the South Seas Jargon and the early Southeastern Australian Pidgin. Two words for which the evidence of use in the Northern Territory is inconclusive are fellow (1) and what name. Of these, fellow (1) is one of Clark's Southwestern features which almost certainly entered the Pacific region from South-eastern Australia while it was argued that what name was likely to have a similar history despite the fact that records of its occurrence are not sufficiently early in the Pacific region to enable Clark to give it an origin earlier than the 1870s as part of Early Melanesian Pidgin.

What therefore can be said with any certainty? Only that in the first half of the nineteenth century there was an established English-based pidgin in the southern parts of Australia and a widely utilised South Seas Jargon in the Pacific and that in the Northern Territory, the most significant and long-lived site of pidgin development was at Port Essington where the majority of the garrison were British soldiers who had been previously stationed in Sydney where exposure to Southeastern Australian Pidgin English or to the South Seas Jargon was probable. They were also likely to have had shipboard exposure to a nautical jargon. The later settlers at Escape Cliffs were largely from South Australia where a variant of Southeast Australian Pidgin English was in wide use. It is likely that these Europeans utilised, on contacting the Aboriginal inhabitants, some well-known linguistic items from pidgins to which they had already been exposed. How else does one explain the origin of words such as plenty and piccaninny? None of the lexical items thus far located are inconsistent with these conclusions. Given that the number of items is very small, they nevertheless support the hypothesis. Unless more lexical evidence is located, the hypothesis will not be able to be further refined.

The lexicon after 1870

Pacific comparative features

A significant period of Pidgin English development occurred in the 1870s. This period began with the permanent settlement of Darwin and saw a rapid increase in the non-Aboriginal population of Darwin and its hinterland from 200 in 1870 to approximately 3,000 in 1880 of whom well over 2,000 were Chinese (see Table 5, page 172). The records indicate that by the 1880s there was a well-established and apparently quite widely understood English-based pidgin, which demonstrates that the 1870s were the most important decade of pidgin development. Unfortunately, only four short sentences are recorded in the literature relating to the 1870s and except for very good (NTTG 1873:26 Dec.), already recorded in the 1840s, they contain no lexical items of value for the purposes of comparison.¹⁴³ In fact, the two sentences recorded by Wildey (1876:118) are close to Standard English. There are two long passages from this era which purport to be in Darwin Pidgin English (NTTG 1873:5 Dec., 1874:2 Jan.). They are given in full in Appendix D. These passages are both

'letters to the editor' and are written in what is intended to be Pidgin English for journalistic effect although presumably the European writers would have expected their European readers to recognise the idiom. The passages contain four additional items of Clark's comparative features — the World features *been* and *him*, the Sino-Pacific feature *all same* and the Southwestern feature *along* (2). In view of the dubious authenticity of the passages as genuine examples of the pidgin and in view of the fact that the comparative features they contain are recorded a few years later in the 1880s in more reliable sources, they will not be discussed any further. There is a possibility that more recorded speech may be located in the future, particularly in some of the as yet unresearched official manuscript sources. Unless and until further data is located, conclusions based upon the study of the lexicon alone will have to depend upon those items known to have been in use by the 1880s although not recorded in the 1870s.

The most extensive records of Northern Territory Pidgin English come from the writings of Searcy (1909; 1912) concerning Darwin and the coast in the 1880s and Gunn (1905; 1908) concerning Elsey Station in 1902. This uneven distribution does not reflect the extent of pidgin usage but reflects the location of writers interested enough to record any.

Twenty of Clark's thirty-two comparative features have been found so far in literature referring to the Northern Territory. As discussed above, four of these were recorded in the 1840s — *plenty*, *piccaninny*, *no good*, *very good*. Twelve of the remaining sixteen were recorded in literature relating to the 1880s. In terms of publication date, four of these are first found in Sowden (1882) and eight in Searcy (1912). No historical linguistic inferences can be drawn from this because both writers were recording incidents in the same era. Sowden, in fact, notes the presence of Searcy in Darwin in 1882. The four comparative features found in Sowden (1882) are all also found in Searcy (1912). The items, therefore, recorded by these writers will not be differentiated but considered as one group.

Together with the four previously recorded World features, there are an additional six World features, *savvy*, *too much*, *been*, *by and by*, *got and him*; two Sino-Pacific features, *all same* and *catch*, and four Southwestern features, *all* (1), *fellow* (1), *along* (2), and *kill*. This set of features does not add an historical dimension which differs in any way from the conjectures made earlier from the meagre data of the 1840s. These are essentially a sampling of those features known to be typical of pidgins of the Pacific at the time. The World features place the Northern Territory Pidgin in the context of the English-based pidgins of the colonial era with its universal pool of lexical items carried around the world by explorers, soldiers, prospectors, traders and settlers. The Sino-Pacific features place it in the context of those South Pacific pidgins which show an obvious and distinct influence of Chinese Pidgin English. The Southwestern features link the Northern Territory Pidgin to the development of English-based pidgins in the South-west Pacific region, in which the Australian developments and innovations were particularly important. The data make it increasingly obvious that the major lexical sources of Northern Territory Pidgin were existing pidgins and that, more specifically, the lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin shows obvious relationships with the Pacific pidgins of the era, particularly the pidgins of South-eastern Australia.

There are only four additional items from Clark's list of comparative features which are definitely recorded in the literature relating to the period 1890 to 1910. These are two World features, suppose and along (1) and two Southwestern features, belong and what name. No particular significance can, at this stage of our knowledge of the lexicon, be attached to these dates. In the same way that it is evident that words recorded in literature relating to the 1880s must have been in use in the decade before that, it is highly unlikely that the known records of these four words mark particularly early uses of them. It would seem much more likely that they were in use in the 1880s and 1870s, but did not happen to be recorded at the time. Even if they were not in use, their appearance around the turn of the century would still only further corroborate the conclusions already drawn regarding the origin of the lexicon.

The last group of items from Clark's list of comparative features in Table 12 are those which have not yet been located in any of the literature relating to the Northern Territory prior to 1910. It is important to examine these words as the absence of some of them is particularly significant. They are the World features, something and where, the Sino-Pacific feature, stop, the Southwestern features, all together, he, bullamacow, fellow (2), kaikai, pigeon and you me, and the Melanesian features all (2) and man bush.

There are several of these which might have been expected to have been found in the Northern Territory Pidgin and indeed may well be found if any further recorded speech is located. These are features which occur in modern Kriol and which therefore could conceivably have been present in its pidgin antecedent. One Kriol feature which may have formed part of the Northern Territory Pidgin is the World feature where. An older Kriol feature, fast becoming archaic, it is nevertheless found in the speech of older speakers (John Sandefur 1984: personal communication).¹⁴⁴ Mühlhäusler (personal communication), however, believes it unlikely that where may have been part of Northern Territory Pidgin English.

Another Kriol feature likely to have occurred in the pidgin is fellow (2), as a plural suffix in personal pronouns as it now occurs in Kriol pronouns such as yubala (2nd person plural), dubala (3rd person dual) and so on. In the same context you me is found as yunmi (1st person dual inclusive). They are part of a structured pronominal paradigm, more elaborate than that of English (see Sandefur 1979:85-89). As a completed paradigm, it no doubt attained its present form as part of the creolisation process, but it would nevertheless be reasonable to expect that there were recognisable antecedents in the pidgin.¹⁴⁵

This leaves nine items found neither in records of Northern Territory Pidgin English nor in modern Northern Territory Kriol. The Sino-Pacific feature stop is not found in modern Kriol in the sense in which Clark uses it as a comparative feature, although it is present with a function more analogous to its standard English usage.¹⁴⁶ Strictly speaking, the related items all (2) and all together are not found in Kriol either. There are analogous features in Kriol, lexically derived in part from the English all, particularly olabat, said to be derived originally from all about. In this form, it does occur in the Northern Territory Pidgin prior to 1910.

Him take all about tucker
(Searcy 1912:191)

As the use of about would appear to be an Australian, if not Northern Territory innovation, there does not seem to be sufficient justification at this stage of our knowledge of Pacific pidgins, to connect all about with either all (2) or

all together. It is quite reasonable to presume that it could have been derived directly from English rather than from an existing pidgin. Indeed it could reasonably be argued that it has nothing to do with about, but is derived from the English phrase all of the.

The remaining items are most significant by their absence. They represent the exclusively non-Australian content of Clark's list of Pacific comparative features. The World feature something was only found in the Pacific in Melanesian pidgins (Clark 1979:19), as were the strictly Melanesian features all (2) (discussed above) and man bush. Of particular interest are the Southwestern features not found in the Northern Territory pidgins because, according to Clark's categorising of them, they are features which are peculiarly shared by the 'Melanesian pidgins and Australian creoles' (Clark 1979:19). This may be true of Torres Strait or Cape York Creole, but it is not true of Northern Territory Kriol. It will be shown below that the items he, pigeon, bullamacow and kaikai are not found in Kriol and have not been located in any contemporary references to Northern Territory pidgin. They are significant evidence that the presumed relationship between Kriol and Cape York Creole (Sharpe 1975:1-2; Clark 1979:21, 1983:24; Dixon 1980:73) because of a supposed common Melanesian pidgin ancestry may be false. In support of such a contention, it is necessary to examine these items more closely.

He, as a comparative feature, is defined by Clark (1979:16) as a predicate marker, following a third-person subject.

... man Makura, he no want missionary.
(Early Melanesian Pidgin, quoted in Clark 1979:39)

In Northern Territory Pidgin, in similar constructions, either him was used or, more often, there was no predicate marker at all, it being, after all, a redundancy at least by analogy with English.¹⁴⁷

Moyaut him bin tellem me.
(Searcy 1912:191)

Blackfellow bin finnissem.
(Gunn 1905:83)

Pigeon, as a comparative feature, is defined by Clark (1979:17) as a term for the taxonomic classification *bird*. It was not used as such in any known examples of Northern Territory Pidgin. The references to birds used only species names, taken either from English or from an Aboriginal language.

Jungle fowl sit down there.
(Searcy 1912:90)

Jenning-gherrie come on
(Gunn 1905:25)

This finding is consistent with the semantics of zoological classification in Aboriginal languages of the region. I am not aware of any Aboriginal language with a classificatory term corresponding precisely to the English concept of 'bird'. Some of the coastal languages have a category which groups birds with other flying animals. In the Anindilyakwa language of Groote Eylandt, for example, Waddy (1983:161-163) glosses wurrajija as *winged creatures and others*. According to Rudder (1983:161-163), in the Yolngu language group of north-eastern Arnhem Land, the concept of 'bird' is included within a much wider taxonomic category, warrakan, which includes land mammals and reptiles.¹⁴⁸ My own research into the Aboriginal languages still spoken in regions adjacent

to the present Kriol speaking localities, indicates that in some of these languages, birds are classified as part of a similarly broad taxonomic category. In the Ngalkbon language,¹⁴⁹ for example, the taxonomic category, *mayh* includes birds and most mammals and reptiles.¹⁵⁰ It could therefore be argued either that the item *pigeon* was not part of the model language presented to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Alternatively, it could be argued that even if it had been presented by Europeans, such was its inconsistency with the semantics of Aboriginal languages that it was not adopted. There is, however, no evidence that it ever was part of any such model language.

Bullamacow, as a comparative feature, is given by Clark (1979:15) as *bull*, *cow*, *ox*, etc. The absence of this word from Northern Territory Pidgins is particularly noteworthy. One major site of pidgin development and usage was the Roper River region, especially in association with the cattle industry. If, as is often presumed, Northern Territory Pidgin was an outgrowth of the Early Melanesian Pidgin of coastal North Queensland, the ancestor of modern Cape York Creole, then it would be highly probable that the Early Melanesian Pidgin term, *bullamacow*, would have been part, at least, of the pidgins spoken in the cattle industry. It was certainly in use in North Queensland. Older Aboriginal people in that region recall *bullamacow* as an old-fashioned, but nevertheless known word (Bruce Rigsby, personal communication). It is not known in the Roper River region today nor was it recorded in any pidgin examples from that region. The word recorded from that area was *bullocky*.

Missus, I bin find bullocky.
(Gunn 1905:49)

Kaikai, as a comparative feature, is used both as noun *food* and verb *eat*. It is the one word, of all Clark's comparative features, which could not have originated anywhere but in Polynesia. Among the many Polynesian languages which have the form *kai* for *eat* or *food*, Clark (1979:31) regards Maori as the most likely point or origin for *kaikai*. It was reported from New Zealand as early as 1817, and from that point on, it is widely reported in jargon and pidgin throughout the Pacific (Clark 1983:15), including North Queensland, where it is still in use in Torres Strait Creole.

Above all other items, the presence of *kaikai* in Northern Territory Pidgin would be strong evidence of some connection between it and the South Seas Jargon or Early Melanesian Pidgin. *Kaikai*, however, has not yet been found in any recorded examples of the Northern Territory Pidgin. There are, of course, many lexical items which would be expected in the Northern Territory Pidgin of which evidence is lacking simply because no one recorded any speech containing them. One might also under such circumstances expect to find a corresponding semantic gap in the known lexicon. This is not the case. Not unexpectedly, of all topics mentioned in the examples which have been recorded of English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory in the period under discussion, food and eating is the most frequent subject of conversation. The earliest known mention of food is in the 1840s where Leichhardt recorded the names of specific food items.

You no bread, no flour, no rice, no backi — you no good.
(Leichhardt 1844:523)

Throughout the whole period, specific food items are frequently recorded. The first reference to a general name for food is the use of the term *tumtum* in early Darwin which was discussed in Chapter 9, page 253.

Harry, me like you so much, give me "TomTom".
(Willey 1876:118)

Tumtum was replaced by tucker, which is the only general term for food recorded by Searcy or anyone else in the 1880s and later.

... good fellow tucker ... all same hen eggs.
(Searcy 1912:74)

Tucker was the term used in the pidgins of the pastoral regions, as was its verb form tuck out, the antecedent of the modern Kriol word dagat.

Pussy-cat been tuck-out custard
(Gunn 1908:213)

Two fellow been sit down and tuck out.
(Spencer 1928 (1902):591)

There would appear to be sufficient evidence to conclude that *kaikai* was not part of the Northern Territory Pidgin. Sharpe (1974), however, claims that *kaikai* is part of what she referred to at the time as 'the "pidgin English" Creole of Roper River', i.e. part of modern Kriol. Sharpe sees this as evidence that the antecedent of Kriol, Northern Territory Pidgin English, may have been the same Pidgin English spoken in coastal north Queensland on the sugar plantations, i.e. what Clark terms Early Melanesian Pidgin. Sharpe also adduces anecdotal evidence in support of this contention.

My elderly informant at Ngukurr, Mr. Barnabas Roberts, an Alawa tribesman (now deceased), told me that stockmen brought PE to the Territory from the Queensland canefields in the last century, during the time when South Seas Island labourers were brought there ... My informant told me this pidgin became a lingua franca at Ngukurr at its inception as a mission in 1908, when Aborigines from a dozen or so tribes found refuge there. (Sharpe 1974:2).

There has been a general impression for well over a century that forms of pidgin English spoken in Australia were spread by stockmen but it was Sharpe who first suggested in a scholarly context that the same stockmen may have specifically carried the Early Melanesian Pidgin to the Northern Territory. This hypothesis is now becoming entrenched in the literature. Dixon, for example, for whom Sharpe (1974) was a source, linked together the origins of Torres Strait (Cape York) Creole and Kriol.

These Australian Creoles are believed to have derived in part from Beach-La-Mar, a Melanesian pidgin that was spoken by Kanaka labourers brought from the South Sea Islands to work on Queensland sugar plantations in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, their vocabularies contain a few neo-Melanesian words such as *kaikai* 'food, eat' ... (Dixon 1980:73)

In his correlations of the history of Pacific pidgins, Clark simply adopted Sharpe's suggestion and took it as demonstration of an Early Melanesian Pidgin-Northern Territory Pidgin relationship. Clark particularly stresses the significance of *kaikai* (Clark 1979:11,17,22; 1983:24).

During the labor trade period there was some influence in the opposite direction, from Melanesia to Australia. Its effects can be seen in two well-described modern Australian creoles: Cape York (Crowley and Rigsby 1979) and Roper River (Sharpe 1975). If nothing else, the indisputably Polynesian item *kaikai* in both languages would be proof of such influence ... Sharpe (1975) reports that according to local tradition at Roper River the pidgin was brought to the Northern Territory from Queensland ... (Clark 1983:24)

Clark therefore relies upon Sharpe (1975)¹⁵¹ for the only two pieces of evidence of which he is aware — the presence of *kaikai* in Kriol and the 'local tradition' that stockmen brought pidgin English from Queensland.

It can certainly be disputed that the belief that stockmen brought pidgin English from Queensland is a 'local tradition'. The phrase is actually Clark's, not Sharpe's, who quoted only her 'elderly informant', Barnabas Roberts. If it was ever a local tradition, it was never a particularly strong or well known one. I have frequently asked knowledgeable elderly Aboriginal people where they thought the original pidgin English came from and I have received a variety of answers. Some elderly Bamyili residents said it was brought by stockmen but some nominated miners at the Maranboy tin mine or even more recent intruders such as the military during World War II. In fairness, however, it should be stated that for some Bamyili people, the tin mine or the military represented their family's first significant contact with the English language. The writer has also asked elderly Ngukurr (Roper River) people whose most frequent response was that the missionaries spoke to them or to their parents in pidgin. Sandefur (personal communication) was informed by an elderly Ngukurr woman that she learnt to speak pidgin from the Chinese at Pine Creek.

Sharpe was only doing what the writer and Sandefur have done, which was to ask some knowledgeable people a difficult question. What we all received in answer were intelligent responses based on the earliest events of which the informants had any knowledge. In this case, Barnabas Roberts' statement that the pidgin English was brought from Queensland by stockmen was the most reasonable generalisation he could make about what was obviously a complex matter. The pidgin was certainly in use earlier than the mission era and Barnabas Roberts was correct in dating its origin earlier than the mission and in nominating stockmen as key agents in its development. If, however, Barnabas Roberts also told Sharpe that the stockmen actually brought the pidgin from 'the Queensland canefields' when 'South Sea Island labourers were brought there', then in this case, he was speculating upon a possible but not indisputable connection. It is this writer's view that these were not Barnabas Roberts' words at all, but Sharpe's. The sense of the paragraph quoting Barnabas Roberts in Sharpe (1974: 2) is not lost if it is presumed that Sharpe expanded the statement about the Queensland stockmen to include reference to the sugar industry and the Pacific labour trade in order to clarify a possible connection for which she believed she may have discovered evidence. The idea is, of course, not impossible and as Sharpe also believed she had found the word *kaikai*, the explanation she discussed was not unreasonable. Despite the fact that it seems strange that stockmen should have come from canefields it could be argued that the general mobility of the population may have resulted in the diffusion of pidgin forms inland from the coast, particularly if Pacific Islanders were employed as shepherds.

As discussed in Chapter 7, the writer's researches into the linguistic history of the region reveal that the first significant linguistic contact between the Aboriginal people of the Roper River region and English-speaking Europeans was during the Overland Telegraph construction era in 1871-1872. These years marked the historical beginnings of the English-based pidgin of the region. Buchanen (1934:83), for example, was of the opinion that the pidgin English with which he communicated in the 1880s had originated in that era. The construction workers were mainly from South Australia and had no connection with the Queensland canefields. In fact, in 1871 the use of Pacific Islander labour on Queensland sugar plantations was less than ten years old and only just gaining momentum.

It is, nevertheless, true that the major pidgin development was in association with the pastoral industry as it was finally the major reason for an English-speaking presence in the region. The history of the pastoral frontier has been discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Although the first stock drives into the Northern Territory were from South Australia along the Overland Telegraph, all major commercial stocking of pastoral properties came along the Old Coast Track through Queensland. The major development of Northern Territory cattle stations and the major movements of stock and stockmen took place from central and southern Queensland and New South Wales. As shown in Chapter 7, Glencoe Station, for example, was stocked in 1879 from Aramac Station in central Queensland and in 1881 from St. George Station in southern Queensland. Elsey Station was stocked between 1880 and 1882 from Sturt's Meadows Station in New South Wales.

These stockmen came from regions where English-based pidgins were in use well before the Early Melanesian Pidgin was developing on the coastal canefields. As Dutton (1983:90) points out, Queensland was initially part of New South Wales and it was inevitable that in the initial years of the settlement of what is now Queensland, forms of Pidgin English spoken in New South Wales should have had considerable influence on forms which developed there during the period 1823 to 1859.

In 1864 the 'recruitment' of Melanesians for work in the Queensland coastal canefields commenced. Dutton and Mühlhäusler (1984:239) make the important point that a small proportion of these were employed in the pastoral industries in the interior of Queensland. This fact, however, does not necessarily lend credence to the hypothesis that Early Melanesian Pidgin English was a major source of Northern Territory Pidgin English. Rather, as Dutton and Mühlhäusler (1984:239) point out, the Melanesians are much more likely to have 'picked up much of their knowledge of Pidgin English from Australian Aborigines'. These Melanesians are, in this writer's view, a possible but unlikely source of the term *kaikai* as found by Sharpe.

It remains, therefore, to suggest other sources of *kaikai*. Both the writer and Sandefur have independently sought this word at Ngukurr and in other Kriol-speaking communities. None of the older people at Ngukurr, whom Sandefur questioned, recognised *kaikai* (Sandefur, personal communication), nor did any of the older people at Bamyili and at Beswick Station whom I interviewed.¹⁵² It is not doubted that ten years ago Sharpe found someone or several people who recognised it. The question is, rather, whether or not it can be demonstrated that *kaikai* was part of the Northern Territory Pidgin, or even the Roper River variant of that pidgin, before the creolisation of the pidgin after 1908. It

would seem necessary to demonstrate that it was part of that pidgin, if the word is to be used as proof of a relationship between Kriol and Early Melanesian Pidgin.

At this point in our knowledge, the evidence that *kaikai* was not part of Northern Territory Pidgin is quite strong. Not only has it not been found in any reference to the pidgin, but a perfectly good alternative, *tucker*, has been found. This surely calls into question Clark's contention (1979:22) that Anglicisation has occurred in the replacement of *kaikai* by *tucker*. If this ever was the case, it would have to be argued that such a replacement had already happened by the 1880s, accepting Searcy's evidence, or at the very latest by 1902, as evidenced by Gunn and by Spencer, but there is as yet no evidence whatsoever that *kaikai* was at any time part of Northern Territory Pidgin English.

There is a reasonable explanation for Sharpe's discovery of the word *kaikai*. There were, for example, Torres Straits Islanders, Fijians and other Pacific Islanders employed on the mission-owned vessels which serviced the Roper River Mission from Thursday Island during the 1920s and 1930s (Len Harris, personal communication), but even more pertinent is that the mission founding party in 1908 included three Aboriginal people from the Yarrabah mission in North Queensland (Joynt 1918:3). These were James Noble, his wife Angelina and Horace Reid.¹⁵³

In 1906 the Church Missionary Society decided to open work on the Roper River, in the Northern Territory. The Rev. C. Huthnance and Messrs Joynt and Sharpe arrived at Yarrabah to spend some little time before going on to open the new mission. On their departure from Yarrabah they called for volunteers from among my people. James Noble and a lad named Horace Reid at once responded ...

In due course we bade farewell to the Roper Mission party. They successfully established the mission and the two Nobles remained away from their home at Yarrabah for nearly three years. (Gribble 1933:108)

It is highly likely that while these North Queensland Aboriginal people were at the mission, some words peculiar to North Queensland were heard or even in temporary use. *Kaikai* may well have been one such word. It may have had some currency for those few years and it would not be surprising if people aged around seventy in the early 1970s remembered the word. This hardly qualifies, however, as a demonstration of an Early Melanesian Pidgin ancestry for Kriol.

What conclusions can therefore be drawn concerning the occurrence of Clark's Pacific pidgin comparative features in the Northern Territory Pidgin? As discussed earlier in this chapter, the scant information on pidgin usage prior to 1870 is sufficient only to indicate that the comparative features found in the few recorded instances of pidgin speech were common to both the Southeastern Australian Pidgin and the South Seas Jargon. The possibility of these links with Northern Territory Pidgin English, via the use of previously acquired pidgin features by European settlers, certainly accords with historical facts.

The examination of the Pacific comparative features in the lexicon of the Northern Territory Pidgin during its era of major development and elaboration between 1870 and 1910, enables the rather tenuous conclusions regarding the

pidgin prior to 1870 to be refined somewhat and restated more confidently. The lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin contained a mixture of World, Sino-Pacific and Southwestern features typical of pidgin usage in the Pacific region during that era – that is, typical of both Southeastern Australian Pidgin and Early Melanesian Pidgin. After 1870 there is sufficient data to draw conclusions from the Pacific comparative items which are absent. The most notable omissions are the items which do not occur in Southeastern Australian Pidgins. These are the Melanesian features and those Southwestern features which definitely originated outside Australia. In other words, the only Early Melanesian Pidgin features in Northern Territory Pidgin are those which it shares with Southeast Australian Pidgin, all of which could have originated in Australia. There is no demonstrable lexical link between Northern Territory Pidgin and the Early Melanesian Pidgin of the Queensland sugar plantations. This conclusion also accords with the most reasonable and logical interpretation of the historical facts. The following discussion of peculiarly Australian items in the lexicon further supports this point of view.

Lexical items from the Southeastern Australian Pidgin

One of the most significant aspects of the lexicon of the Northern Territory Pidgin is the presence of features derived from the pidgin spoken in South-eastern Australia, including items from South-eastern Australian Aboriginal languages.

The first permanent European settlement of Australia began in 1788 at Port Jackson (Sydney) in South-eastern Australia in what is now New South Wales. It was a situation in which verbal communication between Europeans and Aborigines rapidly became essential. The first product of these earliest attempts was a jargon in the sense in which that term has been used in this study, what Clark calls a 'macaronic mixture' of English and the local language. In a now rather famous statement, Collins, in 1796, described it dramatically.

Language indeed, is out of the question for at the time of writing this, nothing but a barbarous mixture of English with the Port Jackson dialect is spoken by either party ...
(Collins 1798:544)

The form of pidgin English which developed from this jargon will henceforth be referred to as the Southeastern Australian Pidgin. Although essentially a pidgin based on the English language, one of its most distinctive features was a conspicuous lexical component derived from the substrate Aboriginal languages. These words are claimed by various writers to originate in different parts of New South Wales. A likely explanation of the various proposed sources is that the words were common to many Aboriginal languages of New South Wales. It is reasonable to presume that the Aboriginal words most likely to have become a permanent part of the pidgin were those words which were recognisably similar to their equivalents in the languages of newly encountered groups. It may not be possible, finally to determine an absolute origin of some of these words but the argument is irrelevant in this context – no one doubts that the words 'belong to New South Wales of the old, old days' (Favenc 1904).

The first blacks with whom the whites associated were those of Sydney and Botany Bay, followed by those of the Hawkesbury, Hunter and Twofold Bay. To the dialects of those places we naturally turn for the earliest aboriginal words in use among the white men.

The most interesting vocabulary in my possession is one taken down from the lips of Bennelong, one of the two Sydney blacks, who went to England with Governor Phillip in 1792. Attached to this is another taken from a George's River black named Walwarra, in 1803, by Thomas Jarret Ives, who lived with the blacks and spoke their language.

Both vocabularies were printed at the "Sydney Gazette" office in 1809. In the Botany dialect I find the first record of the word myall, the name given to a stranger. The Botany district gave the word kobbera for head. At Sydney it was cabboora. It gave us mundowie, the word for leg, though widely used for the foot by the whites. From Botany came the words wombat, wommera, yarraman, wonga-wonga, gunya, waddy, wollaba (Wallaby), wallaroo, heelamin, budjerie, corobberie, ball and curriejung.

Yarraman was yeeramahn, from yerra, the teeth, and mahn, long - literally "long teeth", a name for the horse.

The negative was beeal (baal) and the affirmative yooeen. From Botany came the once-familiar words, paialla, to tell, durellie, to fight, coolahra, angry, jerran, frightened and goori, fat.

From Botany comes the word boomerang. Walwarra called it "boomerang" and "bummering". The Botany tribe called the native bear coolah, the same as one of the bear-names at Moreton Bay.

All these words were scattered by the pioneer timber-getters, settlers or squatters from Sydney to the Gulf of Carpentaria. (Meston [1896] in Baker 1966:314)

The words mentioned by Meston by no means form an exhaustive list. Many entered Standard Australian English e.g. corroboree, boomerang, koala, wallaby. The words which are of particular significance in this discussion are those which did not enter Standard Australian English but which, nevertheless, became part of the Southeastern Australian Pidgin and as such were spread widely throughout the whole continent, not as part of English but as part of various pidgins.

A number of these form part of Kriol today and of particular interest are those which happen, also, to have been recorded in literature relating to the Northern Territory Pidgin. These are benjy, bogey and cobra.¹⁵⁴ They will be discussed separately below.

Me bin hurted longa leg and longa benjy.
(Gee 1926 (1909):24)

... big mob hair sit down longa you cobra.
(Gunn 1905 (1902):33)

... him track belong Maluka; him bogey last night.
(Gunn 1905:78)

Benjy *abdomen, stomach etc.*, has been reported in various forms from New South Wales Aboriginal languages such as binji from Jervis Bay on the South Coast and bindi from Botany Bay, just south of Sydney (Morris 1898:30). It is found in Kriol as binji.

Cobra *head* is given as caberra in Collins' 1798 Port Jackson Vocabulary (Morris 1898:91) but is widely reported from languages of the New South Wales south coast e.g. Thurawal: Kobbara *head* (Mathews 1901:157). It is found in the Roper River dialect of Kriol as gabarra.

Bogey *wash, swim etc.* formed part of Southwell's list of Port Jackson Aboriginal words (Ramson 1966:105). It is found in Kriol as bogi.

The presence of these words in Northern Territory Pidgin English provides strong evidence of the position of the Southeastern Australian Pidgin in the development of the Northern Territory Pidgin.¹⁵⁵ It has already been stressed earlier in this study that in colonial settlement contexts such as nineteenth century Northern Territory, Europeans did not normally utilise standard forms of English in communication with indigenous people whom they encountered. They tended to use, instead, modified forms of English. In particular, if they were at all familiar with an English-based pidgin from elsewhere, they used that pidgin in the new context. It may have been presumed to be simpler than Standard English or even, as a number of authorities have suggested, have been presumed to be the 'language of the natives' and therefore likely to be understood wherever new groups of indigenous people were encountered. In this, there is probably no better example in the world than the manner in which the Southeastern Australian Pidgin was spread throughout the whole continent of Australia.

Words quite as unintelligible to the natives as the corresponding words in vernacular language of the white man would have been, were learned by the natives, and are now commonly used by them in conversing with Europeans ... (various Sydney Aboriginal words) supposed by the natives to be English words, and by Europeans to be aboriginal words of the language of that district (Lang (1847) quoted in Baker 1966:312-313)

... the jargon which the stockmen and sawyers suppose to be the language of the natives, whilst they suppose it to be ours, and which is the ordinary medium of communication between the squatters and the tame black-fellows.
(Hodgkinson (1845) quoted in Baker 1966:313)

The pidgin talk which is considered so essential for carrying on conversation with a blackfellow is mostly of very old origin. Of late years few words appear to have been added to its delirious jumble of the English and Australian languages; and most of it is derived from New South Wales and Victoria ... As the whites pushed on and on amongst new tribes, nothing was taken from the local dialects to add to the general pidgin stock, but the original was carried along ...
(Favenc [1904] quoted in Baker 1966:313)

It was not only the Aboriginal content which was 'of very old origin' but also much of the English content. Clark (1979:43) has already shown that some of the Southwestern features of the South Seas Jargon could well have originated in Australia, some of them being recorded in Australia long before they were recorded in the Pacific (e.g. along (2): Australia, 1844, Melanesia 1877; belong: Australia 1831, Melanesia, 1863; fellow (1): Australia 1850, Melanesia 1871). It has, furthermore, been argued earlier in this chapter that those Pacific comparative features recorded in the Northern Territory Pidgin were either the ubiquitous World and Sino-Pacific features or those members of the set of Southwestern features which originated in Australia.

As well as Clark's comparative features, there is also a significant set of lexically English innovations which do not appear to have entered other Pacific pidgins, but which characterised the peculiarly Australian variety. Clark suggests that this set includes at least the following: whitefellow *European*, blackfellow *Aborigine*, tumble down *die*, *kill*, it as a transitive suffix, and sit down *camp*, *stay* and, most importantly, in the existential sense of *be*.

Whitefellow and blackfellow as a contrasting pair are both commonly recorded in Northern Territory Pidgin. While blackfellow continues to be used in Kriol as blekbala, the term whitefellow has been replaced by Munanga in the Roper River region.¹⁵⁶

Whitefellow no savee.
(Parkhouse 1895:640)

Blackfellow him sabe.
(Parkhouse 1895:647)

Him close up whitefellow, I think.
(Gunn 1905:88)

No more, Missus, him blackfellow alright.
(Gunn 1905:88)

Tumble down is recorded occasionally in Searcy's writings although even there it appears to be interchangeable with kill. It appears to be used in the sense of *die* rather than *kill*. Compare the following two quotations.

Look out, Captain, him bite you dead. Him very bad fellow,
him bite tumble down quick fellow.
(Searcy 1912:87)

Him been say blackfella bin killem Malay all bout all same
Malay killem blackfella.
(Searcy 1912:179)

Searcy was recording communications which took place in the 1880s. By the time Gunn was recording Northern Territory Pidgin at Elsey Station in 1902, tumble down appears to have been replaced by kill him dead, while kill had already acquired its modern Kriol meaning of *strike* or *hit*.

Bett-Bett bin kill Rolly ... me no more bin talk kill him
dead fellow. Me bin talk kill him longa quart pot.
(Gunn 1905:51-52)

It as a transitive suffix is found occasionally in records of Northern Territory Pidgin, mostly as a suffix to the verb 'give'. In most other contexts, the transitive suffix is him.

Give it tobacco, give it nobbler.
(Searcy 1909:58)

You wantem lubra, you gib it shillen.
(Willshire 1896:15)

... give it knife, it cutem head.
(Searcy 1912:94)

In the last of the above three quotations, the two transitive suffixes are found together in the one sentence. Give it survives in Kriol as gibit although the transitive marker in Kriol is normally -im. As Sandefur (1979:116) points out, its retention was probably due to the necessity to distinguish between the transitive verbs 'give' and 'keep' both of which would normally have been gibim. It is not so much that an irregular form was developed but that an old form survived with its original meaning.¹⁵⁷ It is probably not a survival of it but a survival of the full item give it. It is interesting that the first of the three quotations above (Searcy 1909:58) is a record of the words of Flash Poll (see Chapter 6, page 168) and is probably the last recorded utterance in the Port Essington Pidgin, evidence perhaps that even in the 1840s, the Southeastern Australian Pidgin was the model presented to the people of Port Essington.

Sit down is commonly recorded in the Northern Territory Pidgin in all of its senses, that is *to sit* or *stay*, but also frequently in its various existential senses e.g. *to be (in a place)* and so on. It is retained in Kriol as jidan.

... more better bring gun, big fellow alligator sit down.
(Searcy 1912:75)

Two fella proas sit down. Macasser man me think it.
(Searcy 1912:176)

... Timbuk bin folla old man kangaroo, where him sit
down dead.
(Kelsey 1975(1888):76)

... big mob hair sit down longa you cobra.
(Gunn 1905:33)

... no good killem alonga head too much bone all same
wood sit down.
(Searcy 1912:55)

There are a number of other Southeastern Australian Pidgin features found in Northern Territory Pidgin English. Gammon *to fake or pretend* was reported from the New South Wales pidgin as early as 1834 (Threlkeld in Baker 1966:312). It was in Northern Territory Pidgin English (e.g. Gunn 1905:94) and is in Kriol today as geman. It is ultimately of English origin and it had nautical uses so that it could have come to the Northern Territory by other paths. It has now entered Northern Territory slang. Another more definite piece of evidence is yabber *to talk*. It was very commonly recorded in Northern Territory Pidgin English (e.g. Gunn 1905:54-55). Its disappearance in favour of *talk* (tok) was discussed in the previous chapter. It was commonly recorded in New South Wales in pidgins and 'bush talk' but its origin is disputed. It could be related to English 'jabber' or it could be derived from New South Wales Aboriginal words. It was almost certainly a distinctive feature of Southeast Australian Pidgin English, particularly in the combination paper-yabber *letter*. It is not

necessary, however, to cite words even slightly dubious when words like *benjy*, *cobra* and *bogey* are so unarguably derived from New South Wales Aboriginal languages.

The existence of these peculiarly Australian words, both those derived from Southeastern Australian Aboriginal languages and those English-based innovations which originated in New South Wales, is strong evidence indeed that Southeastern Australian Pidgin English was the pidgin model brought into the Northern Territory last century. If, in particular, one considers the Roper River region, then using this set of words as proof of a relationship with the Southeastern Australian Pidgin is further corroborated by the earlier demonstration that the invasion of the region was from New South Wales and inland Queensland. Dutton's recent work (1983:106-107) clearly shows that in the 1840s and 1850s, the pastoral invasion of inland Queensland was directly from New South Wales and not via the Queensland coast. Inevitably, it was a Southeastern Australian Pidgin which became the major lexical source of the pidgin of the inland pastoral region of Queensland. Less than twenty years later, it reached the Roper River region of the Northern Territory. Once the Europeans acquired the pidgin in New South Wales or Queensland, they carried it with them as the moving frontier extended both west and north. It became the lexical source language of pidgins developed throughout Australia for European/Aboriginal communication and even for Aboriginal/Aboriginal communication between people of widely separate language communities. Thonemann (1949) in his biography of Buludja, a Mangarayi Aboriginal woman of Elsey Station,¹⁵⁸ records her comments on some of the 'foreign' Aboriginal men who accompanied the first stockmen at Elsey station.

... (there were) a lot of black boys whose language was very different from ours and impossible to understand. The two kinds of blacks had to talk together in the pidgin that the white men had taught them.
(Thonemann 1949:26)

So rapidly did the Northern Territory pidgin become fixed as a language of European/Aboriginal communication, that as early as the 1880s, it was being used in the law courts. Searcy records the following translation of the judge's comments and sentencing in Darwin courthouse. (Similar observations by Spencer in 1902[1928] and Masson in 1913[1915] are given in Appendix B.)

You see em that big fella white man? Him say you bin killem dead alonga Chinaman. Him big fella man say by-em-by plenty fella policeman takem one piecee blackfella along bush long way then one fella white man putem rope alonga blackfella's neck, him been throwem rope alonga tree, pull-em blackfella up, blackfella by-em-by tumble down dead.
(Searcy 1912:127)

This speech by a European court official exemplifies the conclusions that have been emerging from the discussion. It contains many of Clark's Pacific comparative features — the World features *him*, *been*, *by* and *by*, *plenty* and the Southwestern features *along* (1), *fellow* (1). It includes, as well, two Southeastern Australian Pidgin items *blackfellow* and *tumble down*. There is one Chinese Pidgin English item, *piecee*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

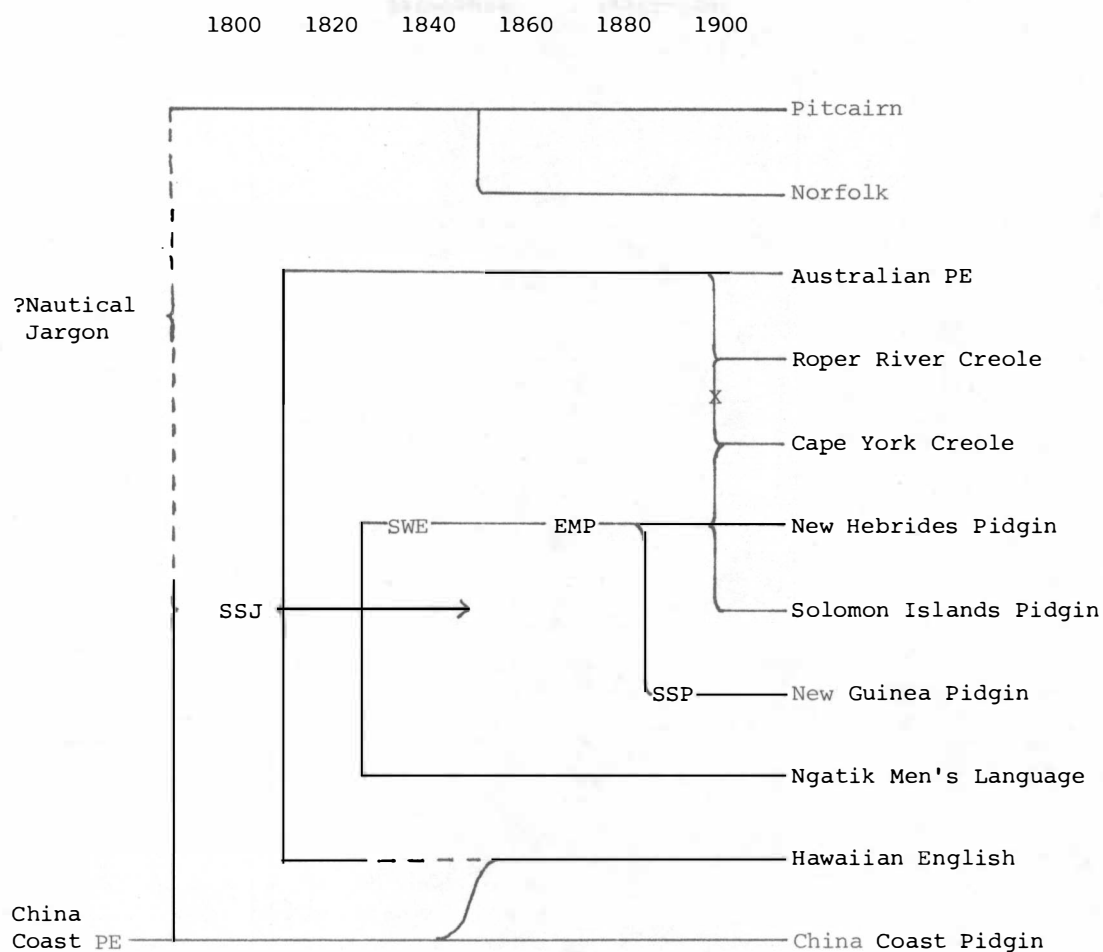
Apart from the Chinese Pidgin English item, there is nothing else in this speech, or in any other examples of Northern Territory Pidgin so far located, to connect this pidgin with any pidgin other than the Southeastern Australian Pidgin. In particular, there is no evidence of any historical connection with Early Melanesian Pidgin. In this regard, Clark's comment (1979:45) is relevant.

In the case of Roper River Creole ... a number of items of the old Australian tradition survive: gabarra 'head', wadi 'tree', binji 'stomach', jidan 'camp, stay', yuway 'yes' and some use of -id as a transitive suffix ... Cape York Creole, on the other hand does not appear to inherit any of this component, and may be a more direct descendant of early Melanesian pidgin ...

It is surely significant that Torres Strait (Cape York) Creole contains indisputably Melanesian and Pacific items while Kriol does not, nor did its precursor, Northern Territory Pidgin. On the other hand, Northern Territory Pidgin English and its creolised descendant, Kriol, contain items indisputably of Southeastern Australian origin while Torres Strait Creole does not.

The family tree of historical relationships between Pacific pidgins and creoles Clark (1979:48) is reproduced below. As Mühlhäusler (1983:8) points out, the scheme has a number of deficiencies. Substratal influences, for example, are ignored — a fact which Clark admits, leaving out vernacular languages 'for the sake of simplicity'. His scheme also presumes continuous development, exaggerates the significance of geographical location and ignores the role of the convergence of various pidgins (Mühlhäusler 1983:8). On the other hand, Clark's diagram, although restricted by the limitations of a 'family tree' model, does endeavour to depict the changes over time in the relationships between different pidgins and creoles, and as such is a valuable contribution to the understanding of these relationships. No doubt Clark himself would welcome its refinement, and the present set of data requires that the line at X, linking Cape York (Torres Strait) Creole and Roper River Creole (Kriol) be deleted, leaving the Southeastern Australian Pidgin English as the major lexical source of Northern Territory Pidgin English.

Mühlhäusler (1983b:13) has also attempted to depict these historical relationships. Acknowledging that 'any attempt to suggest a more definite classification of Australian pidgins and creoles is likely to run into difficulties' (p. 12), he nevertheless produced a tentative 'family network' (Figure 10) as opposed to a 'family tree' (see Figure 9). Mühlhäusler's 'tentativeness' invites research and refinement. This present study indicates that Mühlhäusler is correct in severing any connection between Melanesian Pidgin English and developments in the Northern Territory. This study also highlights Mühlhäusler's own opinion that the label 'Australian Pidgin English' is misleading (p. 12). This data indicates that at the very least, the label subsumes a number of forms such as, for example, Southeastern Australian Pidgin English and Northern Territory Pidgin English which themselves subsume a number of regional varieties, if not distinct pidgins.



SSJ = South Seas Jargon (Polynesia and Micronesia)

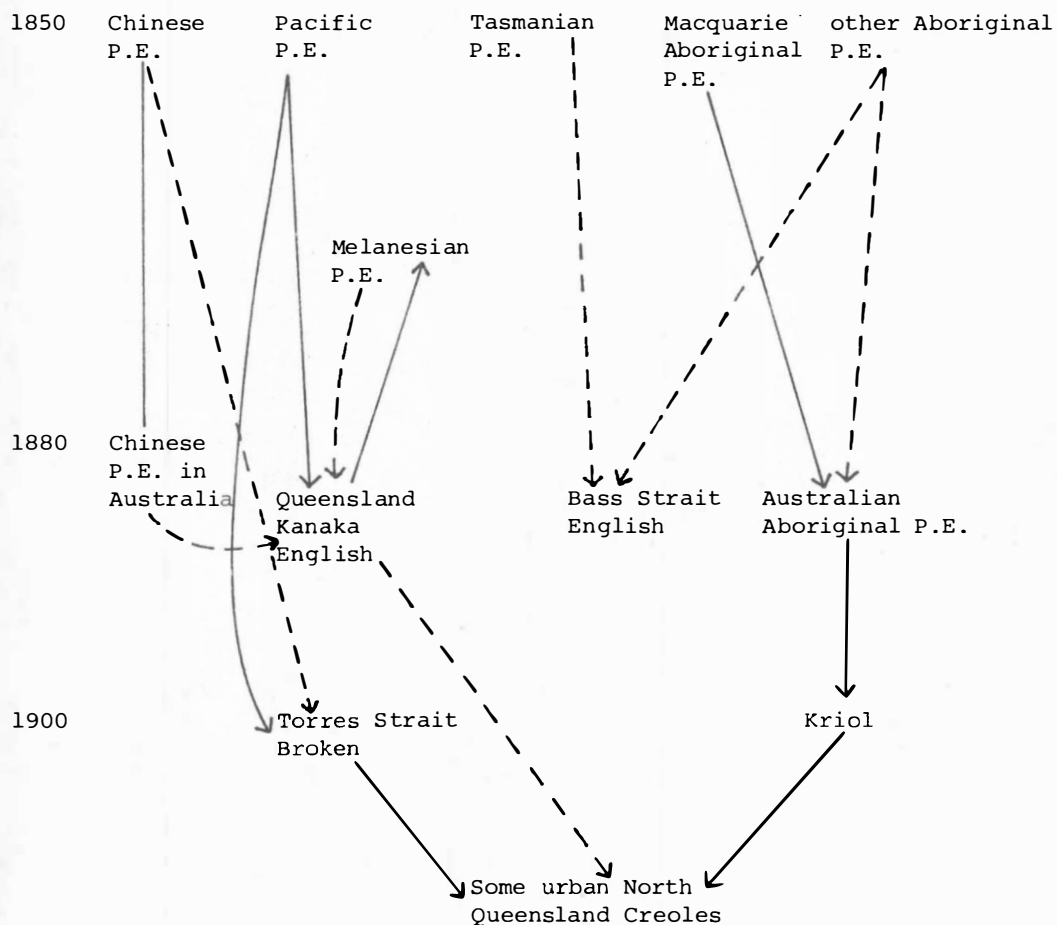
SWE = Sandalwood English (New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides)

EMP = Early Melanesian Pidgin (New Hebrides, Solomon Islands, Queensland, Fiji)

SSP = Samoan Plantation Pidgin

(For the sake of simplicity, the positions of vernacular languages have not been shown.)

Figure 9: Historical relations indicated by comparative and documentary evidence. (from Clark 1979:48)



Strong influence —————→

Weak influence - - - - ->

(Note: Western Australian Varieties such as Neo-Nyungar and influence of standard English not indicated)

[Torres Strait Broken is also termed Torres Strait Creole and Blaikman Tok]

Figure 10: Mühlhäusler's 'family network' of Australian Pidgins and Creoles. (1983b:13)

The influence of Chinese Pidgin English

As discussed fully in Chapter 6, the Chinese began arriving in Darwin in large numbers in 1874. By 1878, they outnumbered the Europeans and had begun to spread throughout the Northern Territory. Their numbers peaked at over 6,000 in 1888 when the European population totalled less than 1,500. They dominated the gold mining industry (Donovan 1981:173-174) and most other aspects of non-Aboriginal life in the Northern Territory until well into this century, although by the turn of the century their numbers had declined considerably.

As shown in Chapter 6, the Chinese people who migrated to the Northern Territory came largely from Kwangtung, the southernmost coastal province of China and in particular, many of them came from the vicinity of Canton, the site of the original development of Chinese Pidgin English and the source from which it spread throughout the treaty ports and beyond. The information, as far as it can be known, regarding the interaction of these Chinese people with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory was also discussed in Chapter 6 although, predictably, the written records relate almost exclusively to interaction with Europeans. In this context, Chinese Pidgin English was the medium of communication or, more correctly, the Chinese spoke Chinese Pidgin English to the Europeans. It is far less certain that the Europeans spoke Chinese Pidgin English. They are unlikely to have had control over more than one English-based pidgin and to have used them selectively.

Examples of the Chinese Pidgin English are given in Chapter 6 and all known examples are given in Appendix A together with all other examples of pidgin speech. The lengthiest and earliest examples are those in Sowden (1882:75-76). These quotations contain the Sino-Pacific feature all same and the World features him, savee, suppose, got, plenty, along (1) and very good. Another Sino-Pacific feature, catch, is recorded in Searcy (1912:118). There are also a few examples of other familiar items of Chinese Pidgin English, such as chin chin *Chinese*, Joss god (Searcy 1909:198), side as a postposed locative marker (Searcy 1909:337), look-see *look* and piece as a suffix to prenominal modifiers (Searcy 1912:121).

Clark (1979:20) expresses a degree of surprise that there are so few Sino-Pacific features in his comparative list, given the significance of the early trade routes between the Pacific and Canton. It is, perhaps, even more surprising that so few items specifically traceable to Chinese Pidgin English were found in Northern Territory Pidgin, given the large number of Chinese people actually present in the Northern Territory. There are only four Sino-Pacific features in Clark's list, all same, catch, and got and stop with existential meanings. In Northern Territory Pidgin English, there were only two of these, all same and catch while, as shown above, existential senses were covered by the Australian item sit down.

... good fellow tucker ... all same hen eggs.
(Searcy 1912:74)

... him bin catchem tobacco all about.
(Searcy 1912:150)

... no more good fella (wood) sit down along island.
(Searcy 1912:172)

Whereas all same and catch could well have entered Northern Territory Pidgin English as a consequence of the influence of Chinese Pidgin English, there is no real proof that they did. It is true that these items are not found in records of pidgin in the Northern Territory before the coming of the Chinese, but then the records from the earliest era are so meagre that one cannot draw any firm conclusions from the known lexical items. Furthermore, it would not have been unreasonable to expect to find some lexical items in Northern Territory Pidgin English which were locally derived from Chinese Pidgin English as opposed to the more widespread Sino-Pacific features. None have so far been located in literature relating to the period. This problem can be approached from three points of view.

Firstly, there was already an English-based pidgin in Darwin and the hinterland mining camps by the time the Chinese influx commenced in the mid 1870s. The Chinese were not present at its genesis nor did Chinese Pidgin English contribute to the critical early years of its development. Similarly, in the pastoral region, by the time there was a significant Chinese presence in the mid 1880s, the pidgin had already been born and over ten of its critical formative years were past. One could argue, for example, that stop may have been a likely candidate for an existential verb, but that sit down had already assumed that function, or that piece may well have been a suitable suffix for prenominal modifiers, if fellow (1) had not already acquired that function.

(Chinese)

... whafor Custom House man say one piece Old Wharf man lascal?

(Searcy 1912:121)

(Aboriginal)

Two fella proas been come piccaninny daylight.

(Searcy 1912:176)

(European)

good fella tucker that big fella snake ...

(Searcy 1912:172)

In other words, Chinese Pidgin English could not be expected to affect significantly the nature of the pidgin or its key grammatical elements, although it could be expected to contribute to the developing lexicon.

Secondly, it could be argued that the features most likely to be borrowed from Chinese Pidgin English were, in any case, already World features or Sino-Pacific features. As shown earlier in this chapter, World features are difficult to interpret historically and may enter a pidgin via one of several paths. We know that the Port Essington Pidgin contained some World features, but we lack adequate data from the critical period in Darwin between 1869 and 1874, that is, between the pre-settlement survey camp and the arrival of the Chinese. Because of the presence of World features in Southeastern Australian Pidgin English, it can hardly be doubted that the early Darwin pidgin contained World features, although there is little recorded speech and only piccaninny is actually attested (May 1872:16). It is not possible to determine whether the Sino-Pacific features all same and catch and World features such as too much, by and by and suppose, all of which are first recorded in Northern Territory Pidgin English after 1880, entered that pidgin via Chinese Pidgin English or via the Southeastern Australian Pidgin English of the Europeans. It is, nevertheless, thought provoking that a European writing pidgin English

for journalistic effect used the Sino-Pacific item all same prior to the influx of the Chinese (see Appendix D). It is possible that some light may be shed on this should any additional direct quotations be located from the period 1869-1874.

If one compares the lexicon of Chinese Pidgin English with Northern Territory Pidgin English, the differences are not great. Not only do they share World and Sino-Pacific items, but they share a large number of lexical items which are of little comparative value. Even the small amount of Chinese Pidgin English recorded in the Northern Territory contains lexical items such as want, leg, see, come, country, think, two and pig, all of which are recorded in Northern Territory Pidgin English. It is not possible to determine whether these items entered the Northern Territory Pidgin English from Southeastern Australian Pidgin English, from Chinese Pidgin English, or even from Standard English; they do serve to emphasise what the various pidgins had in common.

Thirdly, it could be argued that some specifically Chinese Pidgin English lexical items may have entered the developing Northern Territory Pidgin, but eventually dropped out of it again. There is not a great deal of direct evidence of this assertion but the contention that Chinese, Aboriginal and European users of various varieties of pidgin English could hardly have kept their varieties pure, is a convincing argument. Searcy records this sentence from a Darwin court official.

... by-em-by plenty fella policeman takem one piecee
blackfella along bush ... (Searcy 1912:127)

This sentence, in fact, uses both piecee and fella for the same function as a suffix to a prenominal i.e. plenty fella policeman and one piecee blackfella. It would seem likely that this variable use of alternate forms may have characterised the pidgin for many years, particularly in Darwin itself where the greatest linguistic and ethnic mixing took place.

A similar argument could be developed for the pastoral regions. The Chinese were important contributors to life in these regions although never numerous and, perhaps, therefore not major contributors to the pidgin. In this context, what Gunn recorded of the speech of Cheon, the Chinese cook at Elsey Station, is thought provoking. There must have been something distinctive about it because Gunn not only records special words of Cheon's, such as what's er matter and top fellow (1908:214/222), but she also attempts special spellings to approximate his pronunciation such as Clisymus and poodinn (1908:222). On the other hand, Cheon's speech also includes distinctively Australian lexical items such as sit down, blackfellow, and all about.

Fowl sit down close up kitchen
(Gunn 1908:95)

Must have vealer longa black fellow Clisymus
(Gunn 1908:222)

Me savey all about
(Gunn 1908:82)

The events recorded by Gunn took place in 1902. It may reasonably be conjectured that once the majority of the Chinese had left the Northern Territory, those who remained tended to adapt their speech to the kind of pidgin generally spoken around them. Thus they did not, finally, contribute significant new items but reinforced those items, such as the World features,

which were also part of Chinese Pidgin English. This is perhaps yet another example of Mühlhäusler's contention (1983) that in the Pacific region, convergent development has probably been more important than divergent development. There was a sufficient commonality of pidgin speakers in the Top End of the Northern Territory to ensure a levelling out process. Had a pidgin been able to be isolated in a region of high Chinese population such as Pine Creek or perhaps even Darwin, the direct influence of Chinese Pidgin English may have been more evident, but such was not the case.

Northern Territory Aboriginal influence on the lexicon

The remaining significant component of the lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin English is the specifically local material. This includes material from local substrate Aboriginal languages and local innovations with respect to Standard English or with respect to other pidgins which may have been lexical sources.

Local Aboriginal words are a fairly conspicuous component of the pidgin as recorded in the literature.

Big one leetpee. (*turtle*)
(Daly 1887 [1870]:70)

This one my father godloa. (*truly*)
(Parkhouse 1895:640)

Look, Bungawah. (*boss*)
(Searcy 1909:157)

Jenning-gherrie (*a bird*) come on.
(Gunn 1905:25)

You bin poonarie. (*the very best*)
(Gee 1926(1910))

As noted in Chapter 9, these words are special local variations. For example, the words used in the above quotations include Larakia words in Darwin (leetpee, godloa), a Mangarayi word from Elsey Station (Jenning-gherrie), and words from Pine Creek (poonarie) and Roper River (Bungawah).¹⁵⁹ They were, however, only locally known and only locally used. These words never entered the widespread Northern Territory Pidgin English. Obviously, the process of convergence implies the selection of those words commonly understood and the rejection of those words of only local currency. It could, in fact, be argued that they were never part of a pidgin at all and there is no clear case of a European using the words as part of what is essentially an English pidgin.

When, for example, Gee makes his farewells to his Aboriginal companion, Jack, in 1910, it is Jack who says poonarie, although Gee records it. Gee responds with 'good fellow boy' (Gee 1926:33). When Gunn says 'Nang ah! piccaninny' to Bett-Bett, she was not intending to speak pidgin but had obviously learnt a Mangarayi term for *come here* because she liked talking to children. She was clearly surprised when Bett-Bett replied 'me plenty savey Engliss, Missus'.

When Ebimel Woolloomool says 'Jenning-gherrie come on' he is using a Mangarayi word, not because it is really part of the pidgin but because he has no other way of naming this particular bird, which was a significant bird to the Mangarayi people. It is in that sense no more part of the pidgin than was 'A' when Bett-Bett, learning the alphabet, asked Gunn 'What name him yabber, Missus'.

this one 'A'. They are indicative, however, of the manner in which local innovations did enter the pidgin. In other words, if it became important for all parties to discuss Jennings-gherrie or to discuss the letter 'A', then those items would enter the pidgin, at least locally. They would be unlikely, however, to survive the merging of that pidgin with other varieties in the process of convergence which took place.

The use of Jennings-gherrie is an important indicator of the kinds of lexical items which are most likely to come from local Aboriginal languages. These are items which label concepts for which an English term or circumlocution is not available or where such a circumlocution lacks specificity. Animal and plant species are likely to retain Aboriginal labels, as are kinship terms. When Bett-Bett said 'Goggle Eye little bit father belonga me' (Gunn 1905:16), she was obviously casting around for a way to explain an Aboriginal kinship category which neither the English terms 'father' nor 'uncle' adequately covered. Parkhouse's Aboriginal informant solved his problem by simply using the Aboriginal terms.

That one him mollinnyu. (married man) Him have two-fellow
lubra. That fellow lubra have em nimm. (boy) By-and-by
him catch him lubra, him have em nimm. Him lubra have em
bun-ngilla. (girl) By-and-by girl big fellow, him naowa
(husband) catch him, him melog (pregnant) have em bun-ngilla.
(girl) By-and-by nimm big fellow, by-and-by bun-ngilla
big fellow, him catch him.
(Parkhouse 1895:641)¹⁶⁰

The facts, however, would appear to be that such efforts were essentially individual responses when someone was forced to move beyond that which the pidgin was capable of describing. A pidgin is, after all, a pidgin. It is used for restricted purposes. Whereas here and there, there may have been a Parkhouse interested in kinship or a Gunn who cared about a bird, the communications in which they took part were local and even on some occasions private. On the other hand, it should be expected that in Kriol, Aboriginal terms for some biological phenomena or for kinship terms would become an essential part of the language as the pidgin expanded to fulfill all communicative needs between Aboriginal speakers. This prediction is, in fact, the case in Kriol but an analysis of its lexicon is not part of this present study.

A similar argument applies to innovations with respect to Standard English. There are a small number of such innovations in Northern Territory Pidgin English, that is, innovations in addition to those already part of its lexical source pidgins such as Southeastern Australian Pidgin English. The number of these innovations is not large because there was a considerable influence of such established pidgins in the development of Northern Territory Pidgin English. Again, the greatest period of lexical innovation was during the creolisation process after 1908, but with hindsight, many of those innovations can be detected in embryonic form in the pidgin.

We will consider only one example. Kriol has a rich grammatical usage of the term mijelb, derived from English 'myself'. It is used as an all-purpose reflexive and also in many idiomatic ways.

Imin kilim mijelb.
He hit himself.

Dubala wokabat mijelb.
They walk by themselves.

Olabat bin go mijelbmijelb.
They went their own ways.

These are unarguably innovations with respect not only to Standard English but with respect to Southeastern Australian Pidgin English or any other possible lexical source pidgin. Such innovations must occur during creolisation. They can also begin to develop in a pidgin, particularly if the pidgin is expanding or becoming elaborated to enable discussion of new and less restricted topics. For example, when Bett-Bett was learning the alphabet, she distinguished 'little' or lower case 'a' as 'piccaninny belonga mumma "A"' and in reference to its position away from capital 'A', she said

Piccaninny belong mumma "A" sit down by meself.
 (Gunn 1905:50)

This use of meself where English would normally require 'itself', is innovatory and the embryonic early stage of the later complex rules surrounding mijelb in Kriol.

Conclusions

The foregoing discussion of the lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin English reveals that its major lexical source language was the Southeastern Australian Pidgin English. When Clark's Pacific comparative features in the lexicon are analysed, it is evident that in the materials so far located, there are no items which could definitely be traced to a source other than the Southeastern Australian Pidgin. Furthermore, Northern Territory Pidgin English contained items peculiar to the Southeastern Australian Pidgin, including both lexical innovations with respect to English and words from New South Wales Aboriginal languages.

The influence of Chinese Pidgin English does not appear to have been great, although it would have reinforced the adoption and maintenance of some of the World items it shared with Southeastern Australian Pidgin. Some Chinese Pidgin English items were possibly briefly used in the Northern Territory Pidgin. Finally, however, by a process of convergence, only those items remained which Chinese Pidgin English shared with the Northern Territory Pidgin, in the form in which it had developed prior to the arrival of the Chinese.

Predictably, specifically Northern Territory items, including both lexical innovations and items from Northern Territory Aboriginal languages, were present but only as local, sometimes even idiosyncratic variations. Such items, it is argued, tend to establish themselves, if they do so at all, only during and after creolisation.

In particular, there is no substantial evidence that there ever was a connection between the pidgin of the coastal Queensland sugar plantations and the developing Northern Territory Pidgin. This widely accepted presumption is challenged by the data as it is presently known.

CHAPTER 11

THE CREOLISATION OF NORTHERN TERRITORY PIDGIN ENGLISH

Pidgin and Creole

The creolisation of Northern Territory Pidgin English began at the Roper River Mission in 1908 or shortly thereafter. At Ngukurr today there are four generations of people who speak Kriol as their primary language.¹⁶¹ Kriol is the primary language of the oldest Ngukurr people who were born in the decade immediately following the establishment of the mission (Sandefur 1984:46, 154, 159-160, 211. See also Sandefur 1981a, 1981b; and Roberts and Sandefur 1982).¹⁶² It is not the task of this study to describe the Kriol language. A comprehensive description is being built up, the most substantial published contributions so far being Sandefur (1979) and J. and J. Sandefur (1979a).¹⁶³ It is, rather, the task of this study to examine the history of Kriol and the sociolinguistic reasons for its existence. This chapter will, accordingly, demonstrate from linguistic evidence, the historical continuity of Kriol with Northern Territory Pidgin English and then examine some features of its creolisation.

Kriol obviously has an historical and linguistic relationship with Northern Territory Pidgin English. It is particularly significant that the Aboriginal people of Roper River (Ngukurr) community today who speak Kriol as their primary language, are the direct descendants of the remnants of the various language groups who sought refuge at the Roper River mission in 1908. Some members of their families have resided there continuously from 1908 to the present. If linguistic proof is needed, it is not difficult to supply.

Lexical continuity can be demonstrated from the lexical items discussed in Chapter 10 as part of Northern Territory Pidgin English. It was shown in that chapter that Northern Territory Pidgin English definitely exhibited twenty of the thirty-two items which Clark (1979) selected as comparative features for the purpose of detailing the relationship among Pacific pidgins and creoles, and probably contained three others. Kriol retains the same twenty-three features. It has lost none of them and it has gained none of the nine features absent from its pidgin antecedent.

It was also shown in Chapter 10 that Northern Territory Pidgin English owed much of its basic lexicon to Southeastern Australian Pidgin English. This included items such as *benjy*, *bogey* and *cobra*, which were derived from Aboriginal languages of Southeastern Australia. It also included distinctively Australian English lexical items such as *blackfellow* and the existential use of *sit down*. With few exceptions,¹⁶⁴ these too survive in modern Kriol.

Whereas this basic vocabulary survives from the Northern Territory Pidgin English, the most obvious difference between Kriol and its Pidgin English antecedent is the vastly extended lexicon. It is difficult to determine or even estimate with much confidence the precise size of the Kriol lexicon. J. and J. Sandefur (1979a) have published what they term the 'beginnings' of a dictionary but it is far from being exhaustive. A large proportion of Kriol words are borrowed from English. Some of these words were no doubt part of the lexicon of Northern Territory Pidgin English but were simply not recorded in the written materials yet examined. Common everyday words such as *rok rock* or *riba river* could belong to this category. Other words were obviously borrowed as the domains of usage were extended during creolisation. Words such as *hospil hospital* and *baptais baptism* obviously relate to the early mission years and to words learnt from the missionaries, while English borrowings such as *modiga motorcar* relate to an even later era.

There is a significant number of words borrowed from Aboriginal languages of the region. These words most frequently belong to semantic domains of significance to Aboriginal people such as kinship, ceremony and the natural world. Appropriate English words were generally not available in these semantic fields although this could have been overcome by coining or semantic shifts. What is more likely is that these words relate to activities which were engaged in or discussed within the immediate family and language group at the time that the pidgin was being creolised to encompass other purposes. In the early days of the mission, the multilingual environment included both the Aboriginal home languages and the pidgin undergoing creolisation. Domain separation therefore resulted in the retention of Aboriginal words in those semantic fields generally part of family interaction in those years. There are many such words. A few examples are *jaojao water lily stalk*, *karrak-karrak cormorant*, *bunggul corroboree*, *sacred dance*, *lambarra father-in-law*.

The words used as examples above were chosen to illustrate borrowing because they retain meanings reasonably close to their original English or Aboriginal usage. Many words, however, are innovative with respect to both the English superstrate and Aboriginal substrate languages or are coined with elements of both. The Kriol word *mailawik*, for example, was coined from *maila*, an Aboriginal morpheme meaning *poor* and the English word *week*. Literally *poor week*, it designates the week in a fortnightly pay system in which one does not get paid — the week referred to in Australian English as *off-pay week*.

By far the most frequent kinds of innovations are semantic shifts or extensions. The Kriol word *jugabeg*, for example, is lexically derived from the English 'sugar bag', the hessian bag containing half a hundredweight (56 lb./25 kg) of bulk sugar.¹⁶⁵ In Kriol, it means *wild honey*. The Kriol word *waya*, derived from the English 'wire', now refers to a fishing spear for which the three prongs are now generally made from heavy-gauge fencing wire. The Kriol word *baindim*, lexically derived from the English to 'find' also means to *conceive*. Semantic shift and innovative manipulation of the lexicon is also evident in the technique in which words are put together in novel ways to describe otherwise unlabelled concepts. For example, Kriol *budum*,¹⁶⁶ derived from the English word 'put' plus 'him' as a transitive suffix, is normally used in Kriol with a meaning approximating English *put*. *Binji*, as noted earlier, is a relic of the Southeastern Australian Pidgin and means *stomach*. When, however, a Kriol speaker says *budum la binji*, he is not referring to eating but to the internalising of an emotion, such as the bearing of a grudge. It is the response to the need to express such meanings as this that is the very essence of what creolisation is.

In comparing Kriol to its antecedent, Northern Territory Pidgin English, there has also been a great deal of syntactic expansion. Many of those syntactic constructions which in their elaborate modern forms now typify Kriol, can be detected, albeit in embryonic form, in the scant records of Northern Territory Pidgin English. One example, of which mention has already been made in Chapter 10, is the complex reflexive use of *mijelb*, derived from English 'myself'. As the Northern Territory Pidgin English expanded, there had already been developed by the 1900s a need for the expression of reflexivity. In responding to this need, English was pidginised – that is, the English reflexive pronoun system was drastically simplified. Thus the English first person reflexive pronoun, 'myself' was used for all reflexive pronouns or, if Spencer heard and recorded accurately, reduced even further to 'self'.

Piccaninny ... sit down by meself.
(Gunn 1905:50)

Twofellow been go self longa crossing ...
(Spencer 1902 (1928):591)

In the first of the above two quotations, *meself* corresponds to English *himself* or *herself*, while in the second quotation, *self* corresponds to English *themselves*. It is worth noting at this juncture that these are examples of simplification, but not of impoverishment. There is a definite reduction in grammatical complexity, such as loss of gender and number, but there is no semantic loss. The meaning is not diminished.

The use of the pronoun *mijelb* in Kriol for all genders and numbers of the reflexive pronoun is a clear example of a pidgin feature surviving in a creole. Thus we have

Mi bin kilim mijelb.
I hit myself.

Im bin bogi mijelb.
He washed himself.

Olabat bin luk mijelb.
They saw themselves.

The presence of such retentions is indicative of the pidgin origins of the creole. Indeed, the above sentences could easily have formed part of Northern Territory Pidgin English in its later expanded form. Creolisation is seen to have occurred when the simplified structures are expanded and extended to fulfil other purposes not related to the English usages which were originally pidginised. As noted in Chapter 10, Kriol has a rich usage of *mijelb* in innovative idiomatic ways.

Olabat bin go mijelbmijelb.
They went their own ways.

Im jidan mijelb kantri.
He sits all by himself.

These reflexive constructions provide a clear example of pidginisation and creolisation. The English reflexive system became pidginised, losing complexity, or perhaps more accurately, losing redundancy. The pidgin had a simple but sufficient means of expressing reflexivity. Then, under the pressure to fulfil new communicative demands, the reflexive pronoun system

became creolised — that is, retaining clear evidence of its pidgin origins, it expanded in other rather different ways to express much more complex ideas.

Further clear examples of simplification and expansion are found in other aspects of the Pidgin and Kriol pronoun systems. Table 13 compares the subject pronoun paradigms of English, Northern Territory Pidgin English (before 1908), and Kriol.

Table 13: Pronouns in subject position — a comparison			
PRONOUN	ENGLISH	NTPE (prior to 1908)	KRIOL
1ST PERSON Singular	<i>I</i>	me (I) ¹⁶⁷	mi ¹⁶⁸
dual inclusive			yunmi
dual exclusive			mindubala
plural inclusive	<i>we</i>	we	wi
plural exclusive			mibala
2ND PERSON Singular			yu
dual	<i>you</i>	you ¹⁶⁹	yundubala
plural			yubala
3RD PERSON singular masc.	<i>he</i>		
singular fem.	<i>she</i>	him	im
singular neut.	<i>it</i>		
dual			dubala
plural	<i>they</i>	all about (they)	olabat

A study of Table 13 reveals that the English pronoun system was pidginised, the major loss in the subject pronouns being the loss of gender in the 3rd person singular. The table only shows the subject pronoun system but there were other simplifications such as the loss of case distinctions in the 1st and 3rd persons. English had, of course, already lost case and number distinctions in the 2nd person, 'you' bearing all functions. During creolisation, the pronoun system of Kriol developed considerable complexity. The loss of gender has been retained, but under the influence of Aboriginal substrate languages, the non-singular pronouns have been expanded to include dual number and plural number, as well as inclusive and exclusive distinctions in the first person dual and plural.¹⁷⁰ Thus, in the subject pronouns, English draws seven distinctions, Northern Territory Pidgin English drew five distinctions, and Kriol draws eleven distinctions.

Sufficient linguistic data on Kriol has been provided in the above discussion to demonstrate its historical linguistic connection with its antecedent, Northern Territory Pidgin English, and to illustrate also the kind of enrichment and expansion that pidgin underwent when it was creolised to become Kriol.

It now remains to consider the sociolinguistic factors in the process of creolisation itself as it occurred at the Roper River mission, bringing to bear on the linguistic events, insofar as we are able to reconstruct them, the relevant theoretical perspectives which were set out in the earlier discussion of theories of creolisation in Chapter 3 of this study.

Language loss

By the founding of the Roper River mission in 1908, there had been a great deal of language loss in an absolute sense. By this it is not meant that there had been significant language change, but that aggression on the part of the European invaders had resulted in severe reduction in the numbers of speakers of many of the languages. As shown in Chapter 8, this particularly applied to speakers of Mara, Warndarang, Alawa, Ngalakan and Ngandi whose relatively small countries stood most critically in the path of European conquest and were readily accessible to the invaders. The rather larger countries of the Nunggubuyu and Rembarrnga speakers extended into rugged, swampy or otherwise inaccessible places where some people were relatively safe from attack. The western Mangarayi people had already identified with and were under the protection of Elsey Station. Those are the reasons why Nunggubuyu, Rembarrnga and Mangarayi are still spoken today, while Alawa, Mara and Ngalakan have only a small number of surviving speakers, Ngandi has only a few fluent speakers and Warndarang has no fluent speakers at all.

Not only had there been the loss of the majority of the speakers of some languages, there had also been great social disruption, so that the lives of the remnants of the various groups were irreversibly changed. It was of particular importance, sociolinguistically, that the normal social processes, by which an Aboriginal person became multilingual, were disrupted. As stressed earlier in this study, multilingualism was (and is) a normal feature of the Aboriginal speech communities of northern Australia (Brandl and Walsh 1982:76). The normal expectation of a Roper River Aboriginal person was that he or she would eventually speak several languages. This multilingualism was not, in the past, the consequence of continual exposure to a number of languages in a settled multilingual community, but was developed over a long period of time in discontinuous but regular contact with other groups. A child's verbal interactions occurred within his or her own family group, in that group's own country. There were, in Aboriginal society, strict rules and conventions governing what language was spoken where. While in a small group within his or her own country a child would mostly have heard the language of that country. This would have normally been the father's language.

It is quite likely that the child would also have heard and learnt some of the mother's language, if the mother was from a different group. This was often the case although a multilingual mother may not necessarily have used her mother-tongue. Dinah Garadji described her ancestry to the writer. She is a Warndarang person, and both her mother and father were Warndarang. In the generation before that, however, on Dinah Garadji's father's side, his father was Warndarang, but his mother was Mara.

So the child had exposure to and learnt one main language and perhaps a subsidiary language in early childhood. As the child matured, he or she became increasingly involved in interaction with people from other language groups of the speech community. These groups met for ceremonial and other purposes and

these were the main forums for the acquisition of further languages. Full multilingualism was not therefore perfected until adulthood.

It can hardly be doubted that the invasion of the Roper River region by hostile and aggressive Europeans disrupted these normal processes of social and linguistic interaction. It is true that people still did endeavour to gather for ceremonial purposes although not without fear for their lives (see, for example, Giles 1906:57), but children certainly had even less opportunity than normal to become multilingual and young children may have had no opportunity at all. Thus, in 1908, when the remnants of these various language groups gathered at the mission, children were obliged to interact verbally with a new peer group of other children, many of whose home languages they had not yet had the time or opportunity to learn.

Language use at the Roper River Mission

In the early years of the Roper River Mission, language interaction would have been a complex matter. The languages spoken included English, Northern Territory Pidgin English and as many as eight distinct Aboriginal languages. There were two communicative contexts in which there was not initially a common language. One context was the communication between the missionaries and the Aborigines while the other was communication between children of different language backgrounds.

The European missionaries could initially speak only English while the Yarrabah Aboriginal missionaries could speak their vernacular languages, English and a North Queensland Pidgin English. The local Aboriginal people could speak their own languages and Northern Territory Pidgin English. It is evident that the European missionaries rapidly acquired Pidgin English out of the pure necessity of communicating in a situation where Standard English was not intelligible. As Langford-Smith¹⁷¹ explained 'most of the white men spoke pidgin which we picked up from the natives'. It is difficult now to determine who spoke what language to whom, but it is evident that a great deal of Pidgin English was used both by missionaries and Aboriginal residents. Even twenty years later, Langford-Smith (1935:59) was writing that

No serious attempt had been made to learn the native language or to reduce it to writing. All instruction was done in English or pidgin. I was told that four or five different languages were spoken by natives from surrounding tribes.

As noted in Chapter 8, the Aboriginal missionaries almost certainly already had command of a North Queensland Pidgin English, perhaps what has elsewhere been referred to as Early Melanesian Pidgin English. There were some items common to this and Northern Territory Pidgin English, notably the items referred to in the previous chapter as World features and many English-derived but non-innovative lexical items. It is evident, however, from Reid's observations in 1909 in his letter, now published in Higgins (1981), that he found the Northern Territory Pidgin English curious and worth writing home about. The Yarrabah people would almost certainly have used Pidgin English a great deal and their own pidgin variety may well have influenced the way they spoke Northern Territory Pidgin English although, as argued in Chapter 10, not in ways which permanently affected the pattern of local usage. The Aboriginal

missionaries, in any case, remained less than three years and there is no evidence of any long term linguistic impact. Aboriginal people to whom I spoke in the 1960s said that both the white missionaries and the Aboriginal missionaries spoke Pidgin English. Of course, at first, the Aboriginal people, or those of them whose contact with Europeans had been limited, would not necessarily have distinguished between English and Pidgin English, even though they may have done so later.

It is, as noted, difficult now to ascertain what was spoken when. The only published account of life in the first few years of the Mission is Joynt (1918). Although he gives no information on the speech of the missionaries nor of the Aboriginal adults he does specifically record examples of Aboriginal children using Pidgin English to the missionaries. One is the example of the girl who always said 'Me been combem my hair' when late for church (Joynt 1918:19). The other longer example is a small boy, Percy's description of how he talked another boy, Dennie, into attending school.

Me been go alonga camp; me been takem slate, pencil. Me been catchem Dennie and been yabber, yabber, yabber alonga slate. Me been makem A B C plenty time. Dennie been look hard feller. Byne-by him been talk: "Me like makem all-e-same, which way, you savvy?" "Missionary, him teach 'em me and all about. You come alonga Mission, him teach 'em you alla same". Dennie been talk, "Me like come up". So me been bring him alonga dinghy.'
(Joynt 1918:17)

Even though it was some years afterwards, Langford-Smith's book (1935) contains both English and Pidgin-English speech, sometimes recorded on separate occasions between the same people.¹⁷² Langford-Smith records numerous examples of the use of Pidgin English by missionaries (e.g. 1935:61, 62, 66, 67, 130, 131, 132, 133, 139 etc.). Two of his examples are given below. In the first, Langford-Smith was looking for a young man called Gagudda and in the second, one of the girls was resisting his request of her to sew him a shirt.

"Which way Gagudda bin go?" I asked the excited crowd of blacks. There was a chuckle. "Him bin go bush."
(1935:130)

"You make 'im shirt tomorrow." I told her.
"Me no more savee make 'im shirt," she replied hastily.
"But him easy fellow."
"Well," she replied, "you make 'im first one, then by and by me make 'im plenty."
(1935:131)

It is evident that Pidgin English was also used at times in the school and in other formal situations, at least in the early years when instructions in English were not comprehended. Even missionaries who were basically not in favour of the use of Pidgin English were still obliged to use it in order to communicate at all because of the simple and obvious fact that, except perhaps for a few people like 'Old Bob', none of the Aboriginal people understood English. Even as recently as the late 1930s, the General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society commented on the communication problem, after a visit to Roper River Mission, and advocated the production of religious materials in simple English (Cole 1968:18). This seems to differ little from what Masson observed in 1913 (1915:136-142).

Independent of the problems of communication between the missionaries and the Aboriginal people, and of critical importance, finally, in the creolisation of the pidgin, were the communication problems experienced by the children and young people. In the first years of the mission, children were effectively separated for much of their time from their parents and the remainder of the adult community through the dormitory system. A great deal of the children's verbal interaction was therefore exclusively with other children and in the absence of adult speakers of any of the Aboriginal languages or of English. Hart (1970:154) notes that there were normally between fifty and seventy children, the word 'children' being taken to include teenagers. When interacting verbally within this newly created peer group, children would have been able to communicate with other children from their own first-language group and possibly with children from the group whose language they spoke as a second language, but they would have been unable initially to speak the languages of the other children as there were eight language groups represented.

The situation demanded a lingua franca. There were a number of hypothetical possibilities. One of the Aboriginal languages could have become the lingua franca. This may have happened, for example, had there been one numerically dominant language group, particularly if the traditional owners of the mission site had been numerically dominant, but this does not seem to have been the case. Under some circumstances, a pidgin could have arisen, lexically based on one or more of the Aboriginal languages. This could have occurred had there been no other common language.

There was, however, a lingua franca already in use within the community between Europeans and Aborigines, viz. the Northern Territory Pidgin English. It was shared not only by the adult community but also by the children¹⁷³ and it was the obvious choice for communication among them. In their early attempts to communicate, the children had Pidgin English in common and perhaps some lexical items shared by some or all of the Aboriginal languages. They could also use a full Aboriginal language with a few of their peers. Of all the verbal interactions unlikely to be recorded, the communications between children were the least likely. There are no recorded examples of children's conversations but Masson made an important observation that is the only record likely to be found of how the children actually communicated.

Scuffling, low laughter and chattering in a mixture of pidgin-English and native speech was heard from the building ... (Masson 1915:138)

It could, of course, be advanced that it must have been of some significance that the children were learning English in school. Certainly the early establishment of the school had some importance sociolinguistically. The children had some exposure to English, at least during the mornings which were taken up with formal lessons, the afternoons being devoted to practical work around the mission. The children, however, needed a common language immediately. They were not going to delay talking until they had acquired competence in Standard English. Under the best circumstances, this would have taken many years, and these were certainly not optimum learning conditions. Even today, with the much greater exposure to English through radio, television, travel and the permanent presence of English speaking people in various church, school, hospital and other institutions, conversational English is not rapidly acquired by Aboriginal children in communities where traditional languages are generally spoken. English remains essentially a foreign language, and its

acquisition, even in school, takes many years. In the less educationally sophisticated environment of the early years of the Roper River Mission, the acquisition of English sufficiently rapidly for it to become a lingua franca among the children was beyond the realms of linguistic possibility. Indeed, it could be reasonably argued that even if Northern Territory Pidgin English had not been already in the community, the situation in the school and dormitory system would have inevitably resulted initially in the pidginisation of English as the lingua franca. It was not necessary, however, because a variety of Pidgin English was already present.

As noted earlier, it is certain that in the earliest years of the mission, the Aboriginal people would not have distinguished between Standard English and Pidgin English. The missionaries gave no clear model. It is evident from the early writings, particularly Langford-Smith (1935), that the missionaries used both English and Pidgin English to the same people on different occasions. It is unlikely in the first decade or more of the mission that many Aboriginal people, if any, would have had sufficient exposure to English and Pidgin English to be able to be aware that 'now this missionary is speaking to me in English' or 'now this missionary is speaking to me in Pidgin English'. This is not to say that Aboriginal people did not acquire such competence. Some became very competent speakers of English, obviously distinguishing between Standard English and Pidgin English, particularly after the pidgin had started to become creolised for their communicative needs. It is significant too that in learning to distinguish between the two languages, Aboriginal people were later taught to denigrate Kriol as 'rubbish English', 'Chinaman English', and so on. We are, however, now talking about a later era, after which creolisation had begun and the language separation was becoming both more obvious and more necessary. It is certain in the early years of the mission that such a distinction was not clear.

It is a possibility that the language of the missionaries or the lingua franca of the adult Aboriginal and European community may have been perceived as a language of status by the children and that this could have been a factor in their adoption of Pidgin English.¹⁷⁴ This was, however, a far less important aspect than the need for a lingua franca among children of differing language backgrounds. This issue is of critical importance to the consideration of creolisation in a later section of this chapter and will be discussed in more detail then.

An important linguistic observation made by Langford-Smith (1935:136) concerned a sixteen-year-old girl who suffered from leprosy. She lived at home in isolation and had never been part of the school and dormitory peer group. Langford-Smith was unable to communicate with this girl who spoke neither English nor Pidgin English but only her Aboriginal home language.

Language usage, therefore, in the early years of the Roper River mission was highly complex. The probable major language interactions would have been as follows (see Harris and Sandefur 1983:254, 1984:15-16), although the list is not exhaustive.

1. The Aboriginal adults would have spoken to each other in one of the Aboriginal languages appropriate to the communicative context.
2. The European missionaries would have spoken to each other in English.
3. The Aboriginal and European adults would have spoken to each other in Pidgin English.

4. The Aboriginal children and their parents and other close relatives would have spoken to each other in one of their Aboriginal home languages.
5. The European missionaries would have spoken to the Aboriginal children sometimes in Pidgin English and sometimes in English. The children would have responded in Pidgin English until they learnt to distinguish the two codes, after which they would have chosen whichever was appropriate.
6. The Aboriginal children would have spoken to children from their own language group in a mutually understood Aboriginal language.
7. The Aboriginal children would have spoken to other Aboriginal children not from their own language group in Pidgin English with perhaps a few common Aboriginal items inserted into it. (In fact, in the company of other children, it is likely that children spoke Pidgin English to each other even if they were from the same language group.)

The need for a primary language

Very shortly after the foundation of the Roper River Mission, the stage was set for the creolisation of Northern Territory Pidgin English. Given the conditions which existed at the time and the benefits of hindsight and of an understanding of the recent theoretical perspectives on the process of creolisation, it could be said that creolisation was inevitable.

The nature of creole languages and their formation was fully discussed in Chapter 3. It was shown in that discussion that pidgins are always capable of expansion to fulfil communicative needs, but that the ultimate expansion — creolisation — only occurs when there is a pressure or demand placed upon the pidgin to become the primary language of a new or emerging speech community.

It was shown earlier in this chapter that the massacre of many of the Aboriginal people of the Roper River region, together with drastic social disruption and geographical dislocation, led to a situation where a new peer group of children and young people at the Roper River mission were suddenly thrust together under circumstances in which they had not yet acquired the multilingual competence by which the adult members of the speech community were able to communicate. The obvious lingua franca was Northern Territory Pidgin English, a pidgin which was already the lingua franca of European and Aboriginal communication.

A pidgin, however, was not enough for their communicative needs. These young people were growing up in a social and cultural milieu which differed markedly from that in which their parents grew up. They were growing up in that new milieu as a new group of people who needed to interact verbally in all manner of complex ways but for whom the former traditional processes of language acquisition had been drastically disrupted. It was not that the Aboriginal languages were inadequate for the task. Rather, it was that the younger generation of Aboriginal people could no more await their acquisition of the various languages of the Roper River speech community than they could await their acquisition of Standard English. Their need for a primary language with which to communicate with their peers was real and it was immediate. The basic raw material which the group shared was their local variant of Northern Territory Pidgin English. Once that pidgin became the lingua franca of the

younger generation of Aboriginal people, it was inevitable that it should begin to undergo creolisation.

It must be stressed that this claim of inevitability is not based on the nature of the pidgin nor simply on the fact that it was spoken by the peer group of young people, but on the specific sociolinguistic situation at Roper River mission. It was argued in Chapter 3 that creolisation does not occur every time a child grows up speaking a pidgin as one of his or her first languages. In multilingual contexts, communicative need can be fulfilled by a number of languages of which a pidgin may be one, the multilingual speaker code-switching whenever appropriate. This situation, however, presupposes either that each person in the community is fully multilingual in all the languages of the speech community or, at the very least, in those languages understood by all those groups or individuals with whom communication is necessary or desirable. In such a situation, a pidgin may be one of the languages in use and it may remain a pidgin for a long time. This is precisely the situation which existed in the Roper River region prior to its invasion by Europeans. Members of the speech community were multilingual, communicating with each other in Alawa, Mara, Warndarang or whatever language was appropriate at the time, those groups who lived on the coast communicating with the South-east Asian traders in the 'Macassan' Pidgin. This remained the situation after the European invasion, but a new language, Northern Territory Pidgin English, was added to the speech community's repertoire for communication with Europeans.

It was argued in Chapter 3 that situations such as this may continue to exist for quite a long time. The pidgin may stabilise, or if the purposes for which the pidgin is needed become more diverse, the pidgin may expand and stabilise at a more complex developmental stage. It was further argued that the pidgin remains a pidgin until a demand is placed on it to become the primary language of a group. This position is contrary to that of Bickerton (1974a:126) who argues that creolisation must take place before a pidgin has had time to stabilise, a point of view which was critically examined in Chapter 3. In the Roper River region, the pidgin had been expanding and stabilising for nearly forty years when a demand was suddenly placed upon it. The moment of creolisation did not arise slowly or imperceptibly, but came when the mission provided a place for the gathering together of children who had not yet acquired multilingual competence. They needed a vernacular. They shared the Northern Territory Pidgin English. It did not take long for it to become their lingua franca, nor did it take long for the pressing need for a primary language to prompt its creolisation.

The role of the mission in creolisation

We have already noted Mühlhäusler's warning (1974:29) that in the pidginisation and creolisation of languages, it is important to distinguish between factors which are causal and those which are merely concomitant. For this reason, it is necessary to place in context and then dismiss, as possible prime causal factors in the rise of Kriol, certain aspects of life at Roper River mission which are frequently but erroneously presumed to be significant. Two of the factors most frequently speculated upon are the dormitory system and the language of the missionaries.

The dormitory system was obviously, at least in the short term, of some sociolinguistic significance, but it was not alone responsible for the adoption of Northern Territory Pidgin English as a lingua franca by the children, nor was it alone responsible for its creolisation. It was only significant because of the severe language disruption which had already occurred in the Roper River region and because of the speed with which it brought to a head the need for a primary language. The dormitory system *per se* did not create that need.

It was in the consequences of language loss that the sociolinguistic situation of the Roper River mission differed from other missions. A Pidgin English did not become a lingua franca among Aboriginal people and then undergo creolisation at the Lutheran mission at Hermannsburg (nor at the short-lived Catholic mission at Daly River), both of which predated the Anglican mission at Roper River. It could be argued that the lifestyle at these missions differed from Roper River or that the missionaries were German and not first-language English speakers. It is thus relevant that the Aboriginal people did not adopt Pidgin English as a lingua franca and creolise it at the later-established Anglican missions at Oenpelli and Groote Eylandt, not at the Methodist missions at Milingimbi and Elcho Island, nor at any other mission.

Life at these other missions had much in common with life at the Roper River mission. They all were intended to become 'total institutions' (see page 236). Like Roper River, Christian teaching, building and fence construction, and the establishment of agriculture and livestock were given high priority, as was the schooling of the children and boarding them in dormitories. At a place like Groote Eylandt, however, Anindilyakwa, not Pidgin English was the language of the children's interactions in the dormitories as it was the language of their interactions at home.¹⁷⁵

It is possible to speculate upon what might have occurred at Roper River under a different set of circumstances. Had the Roper River mission been established in less violent times, had there not been such large-scale loss of life and social disruption, the situation there would have been similar to that which obtained at these other missions. If Gajiyuma (Old Bob) and his people had still welcomed the siting of the mission on Mara land,¹⁷⁶ then Mara may have become the language of the mission, with perhaps Alawa and Warndarang as subsidiary languages if those nearby groups chose also to associate with the mission. The more remote groups may well have associated only very casually or intermittently with the mission, if at all.

There is nothing to be gained in continuing such speculation. The undeniable facts are that the Roper River mission was established during an era in which many language groups had suffered badly at the hands of European invaders. Indeed, it was this very degree of suffering which led the Anglican Church to establish the Roper River mission in the first place. As argued in Chapter 8, if the mission had not been established, the last remaining speakers of languages such as Ngandi, Mara and Warndarang would almost certainly have been slaughtered. It was this traumatic prior social history which made the Roper River mission context so sociolinguistically distinct from the other missions. The new peer group of children and young people with an immediate need for a primary language was of critical importance linguistically. The dormitory system was only incidental. It has been argued already in this chapter that the new peer group would have eventually adopted Northern Territory Pidgin English as their lingua franca, anyway, and would in time have creolised it. The dormitory system hastened the process, no doubt, but it did not cause it.

The second factor which must be discussed briefly in order to be placed in its proper perspective and thus dismissed as a prime causal factor in the creolisation of the pidgin is the language of the missionaries.

By the second and third decades of the Roper River mission, it was becoming evident the Kriol was the primary language of the Aboriginal speech community. It was not recognised as a creole but was regarded as a restricted and undesirable pidginised form of English. The phenomena of pidginisation and creolisation of languages were at that time imperfectly comprehended even by linguistic scholars. Although it is perhaps unfortunate that the missionaries were not aware of the sociolinguistic events which were taking place, it is understandable that their grasp of them should have been inadequate. Not even linguistic scholarship could have properly informed them.

Many of the missionaries of the later mission era — and even the Federal Council of the Mission itself — were of the opinion that somehow the early missionaries at Roper River were responsible for Pidgin English usage at the mission, or that they could at least have prevented its long-term adoption by a more concerted effort to use and insist upon the use of Standard English. A number of later ex-missionaries have told me that they never used Pidgin English at Roper River mission nor at the later-established sister missions at Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli. This was in accordance with their own firm principles regarding the use of correct English and in accordance also with what had long become de facto mission policy, although the policy was not formally stated until 1944.

... the use of pidgin English shall be discouraged, and in any region where it is impracticable to base educational work on the use of any one native dialect, English shall be used, and the native trained as far as possible to speak correct English.¹⁷⁷

Despite this general principle, the use of English was not always practical and realistic, even at Roper River, as the writings of Langford-Smith (1935) and others clearly show. It is also evident that some missionaries used Pidgin English at missions other than Roper River. Some of them served at more than one mission station and some ex-missionaries who say that they sometimes used Pidgin English at Roper River, also say that they probably did not modify their speech at other places but tended to use the same kind of language, particularly in less formal situations, wherever they went, believing that Pidgin English was better comprehended. Oenpelli, for example, had been a cattle enterprise before the Church Missionary Society took it over, and there is no reason to presume that the cattle station pidgin would suddenly have fallen into disuse. The Emerald River mission on Groote Eylandt was established by the transfer of personnel from Roper River, including the young part-Aboriginal people for whom the mission was caring. Again, there is no reason to presume that the conventions of speaking with the local Aboriginal people would suddenly have been changed in this new but not dissimilar context.

As noted already, some people may certainly have felt that by insisting on the use of Standard English, they may have prevented a repetition of what seemed to them to have happened at Roper River where what they believed to be an inferior and inadequate style of English had become the local language. Paradoxically, their decision to make a concerted effort to teach and use Standard English was in many ways a sound decision, although not for the reasons that they may have thought. The early mission years did provide some kind of preparation for the

inevitable dealings with the wider, English-speaking Australian community which Aboriginal people would eventually have to undertake. Their acquisition of competence in English was, it could be argued, a necessity. The missionaries' fears, however, that their use of Pidgin English at Groote Eylandt or Oenpelli or elsewhere would result in its adoption as the language of the community were groundless. These communities already possessed major languages. Groote Eylandters today generally speak at least four languages, but their primary language continues to be Anindilyakwa. They also speak the languages of their nearest neighbours with whom they interact, Nunggubuyu and Kriol. In interaction with European Australians, they speak English. Their use of Kriol in interaction with Roper River people has little, if anything, to do with whatever language the missionaries did or did not speak.

The point is, therefore, that the fact that Northern Territory Pidgin English was not adopted as a lingua franca nor creolised at Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli, is not related to whether or not the missionaries used Standard English, but rather to far more sociolinguistically significant factors such as, in the case of Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli, the presence of strong community-wide languages.¹⁷⁸ It is thus incorrect to attribute too much significance to the language the missionaries used at Roper River. Their use of Pidgin English did not create the need for a lingua franca between Aboriginal young people. It may in a minor fashion have assisted the adoption of Pidgin English as the lingua franca although it is difficult to see what else could have happened under the circumstances. The language of the missionaries certainly had nothing to do with the creolisation of the Pidgin. That was a response to the need for a primary language.

The new peer group of children

What the mission did do, however, was to create an entirely new peer group of young people. In providing a sanctuary, the mission brought together a group of children and young people who would never have come together in such a fashion nor have been required to interact before. Indeed, as Masson (1915: 139) observed, some of them were not supposed under Aboriginal law to interact at all. This grouping together of a substantial number of children and young people was an entirely new social phenomenon. It was an entirely foreign concept and has continued to have considerable significance in socio-cultural change wherever Aboriginal people have adopted settled community lifestyles in Northern Australia, but here we are concerned with its linguistic effects. This group needed a primary language, not merely because they lived in dormitories, but because they were a significant and intensively interacting subgroup of the new society. The dormitory system may have accelerated or intensified their need to communicate, but there is every reason to presume that their need to communicate with each other was such that they would have creolised Northern Territory Pidgin English, whether they were involved in a dormitory system or not.

There is, for example, evidence in later years that at other places in the region where a settled community was created, a dormitory system was not necessary for the demand for a primary language by the peer group of young people to be sufficient to result in creolisation of Northern Territory Pidgin English. An interesting major example is that of Barunga (previously Bamyili), to the north-west of the Roper River region. Spared the maraudings

of the Eastern and African Cold Storage Company, the people who now live at Barunga were not as drastically affected by the closing decade of the frontier violence. In the more peaceful years from 1908 to 1939, the language groups of the country to the north-west of the Roper River region interacted with each other in a relatively traditional manner. They maintained their usual modes of communication within the speech community, transmitting multilingual skills through the regular ceremonial and other interactions, and speaking and using a range of traditional languages.

Many, although not all, of these people had some kind of association with Europeans and used Northern Territory Pidgin English in their communications with them. The township of Katherine is, for example, in Djauan country and many of Djauan people lived on its outskirts. Some, like the Rembarrnga people were associated with the pastoral industry, gaining employment and residence on cattle stations such as Beswick Creek and Mainoru, and others, such as the Ngalkbon people, were occasionally employed at the Maranboy tin mine.

World War II brought this era to a fairly sudden close. Huge military camps of thousands of Australian and American servicemen were set up in the area, as it was considered sufficiently far inland to be relatively safe from Japanese bombing attacks which had already destroyed Darwin and ranged as far south as Adelaide River. The irresistible attraction of all the new and interesting activities of the military in the region brought large numbers of Aboriginal people of differing language groups to the vicinity of the army camps. There was a great deal of interaction between Aboriginal and European people. Northern Territory Pidgin English was soon learned by the Europeans to become the vehicle of communication between them and the Aboriginal people.

Although there had not been the same prior decimation of the Aboriginal groups and not, therefore, the same loss of language, the situation nevertheless created the new phenomenon of a peer group of children and young people. They had not yet acquired multilingual competence, and within the peer group, they needed a means of communication. The obvious choice for the lingua franca of the children's peer group was the lingua franca of Aboriginal and European communication, Northern Territory Pidgin English.

There was no dormitory system and there had not been the same drastic reduction in traditional language speakers, but Northern Territory Pidgin English still inevitably became the lingua franca. If, after the war ended in 1945, life had returned to the way it had been, language usage and transmission may also have reverted to traditional patterns. The era of the army camps, however, had so disrupted normal life that some kind of critical point was reached from which, for many of the Aboriginal people, there was no return. After the departure of the army, many of the Aboriginal people chose to remain in what was left of the camps. Although the story will not be detailed here, out of this came the Maranboy Compound, the Beswick Reserve, the Bamyili settlement and, finally, Barunga township.

The demand for a primary language among the peer group of children and young people, therefore, increased after the war. The pidgin was inadequate to serve as a primary language, and it was inevitable that it be creolised. There are families at Barunga today in which there are brothers and sisters whose primary languages differ. A woman who was born before the war, speaks, for example, Rembarrnga as a first or primary language while her sister, born after the war, speaks Kriol as her first or primary language. Both speak Kriol and Rembarrnga, respectively, as second languages.

It needs to be noted that the changes labelled 'creolisation' in the above discussion were in this case more involved than the term implies. Northern Territory Pidgin English had itself undergone changes by 1939 and existed in a complex continuum, like that described by Woolford (1983:7) for New Guinea, where a pidgin co-exists with a creole which had developed from it. Some people in the old army camps spoke Kriol as a subsidiary language already, as it was the language of interaction with their eastern neighbours. As some of the people there were from Rembarrnga and Mangarayi groups, some of whose eastern members now spoke Kriol as a primary language, it may have been for some a second or even possibly a primary language.

Creolisation at Barunga did not occur, therefore, entirely in the absence of a model, and it could reasonably be argued that there was a sense in which Kriol was adopted as much as Northern Territory Pidgin English was creolised. The consequence finally is that Kriol is now the primary language of the Barunga community. It is unarguably Kriol because of the obvious high degree of mutual intelligibility with Roper River Kriol, but at the same time, its rather different history has given it distinctive local dialect differences (Sandefur and Harris, 1986). The rise of Kriol at Barunga has been discussed in some detail, not because it sheds a great deal of light on the process of creolisation, but because it demonstrates clearly indeed the significance of the children's peer group in language change. It has not been an infrequent occurrence in the world at large, nor in North Australia in particular, for a settled community of people to develop in which the adults have strategies for communication but their children have not.

It was this lack of a common language which at Roper River first led the children to choose Northern Territory Pidgin English as their lingua franca. It was the increasing complexity of their interactions which led them to initiate its creolisation. It would be totally wrong to see creolisation beginning and ending in childhood. The result would be an immature child language, expanded from a pidgin only sufficiently far to accommodate the communication needs of children. Creolisation proceeds over the lifetime of that generation. As the children grow up, they have increasingly complex communication needs and so as adults they continue to 'creolise the pidgin' — that is, they continue to manipulate and expand the lexical and syntactic resources available to them to achieve the expression of ever more complex ideas. In this situation, of which Roper River is an excellent example, the children do not complete the process of creolisation in childhood, but they do commence it. When finally the creole is the primary vernacular language of the adult community, it has come of age.

Thus at Roper River, Kriol came of age when the children who had entered the mission in 1908 matured, bringing with them, as partner of their physical, mental, and emotional maturity, the mature language of their adult interactions.

Theoretical perspectives

The literature relating to the process of creolisation was examined in Chapter 3. The framework for that discussion was constructed from the three most frequently encountered statements concerning the way in which creoles are thought to arise:

- a) Creoles arise from pidgins.
- b) Creoles are the primary languages of new speech communities.
- c) Creoles are structurally and semantically more complex than pidgins.

The discussion in this present chapter of the rise of Kriol underlines the applicability of the above statements. If these three criteria define creoles, then Kriol is unarguably an excellent example. It was shown to have clear historical continuity with Northern Territory Pidgin English. It was shown to be significantly more complex than Northern Territory Pidgin English, both semantically and structurally, and to have a greatly expanded lexicon. Most importantly, it was shown that Kriol arose because of the demand placed upon Northern Territory Pidgin English to become the primary language of a new speech community.

Northern Territory Pidgin English continued to be used as a pidgin in many places. Where it became necessary, it underwent expansion, but there are places and situations today where Northern Territory Pidgin English is spoken as a pidgin.¹⁷⁹ It was, in those early years, only at the Roper River mission that the pidgin came under pressure to become a primary language. The situation today is highly complex. Considerable research would be necessary, for example, to determine the extent to which the Barunga dialect of Kriol is a consequence of the creolisation of Northern Territory Pidgin English and the extent to which it is the spread, by adoption, of the pre-existing Roper River Kriol. It is certainly not being argued here that creolisation occurs every time there is a demand for a primary language nor even every time the group for whom such a language is lacking are children or young people. The case of Numbulwar community (note 174) is an interesting modern-day example. Population shift has created a peer group of children who lack a common language. The fact that they are adopting Kriol is not an instance of creolisation, although there is likely to be evidence of linguistic innovation. It is rather an example of the adoption of one of the languages spoken by members of the group, perhaps a dominant or status-bearing language, as the language of the whole group.

A major focus of attention in the theoretical discussions in Chapter 3 was the position of creolists such as Bickerton on the nature and origin of creoles. As shown in detail in that chapter, Bickerton's intent is to concentrate on 'those situations in which the human linguistic capacity is stretched to the uttermost' (Bickerton 1981:4). Bickerton wishes to highlight the human 'bioprogram for language' (1981:xiii), the innate human linguistic ability by which people are able to generate a language in the absence of adequate input. Bickerton's position can be demonstrated from Mühlhäusler's diagram (1979:43) of creolisation.

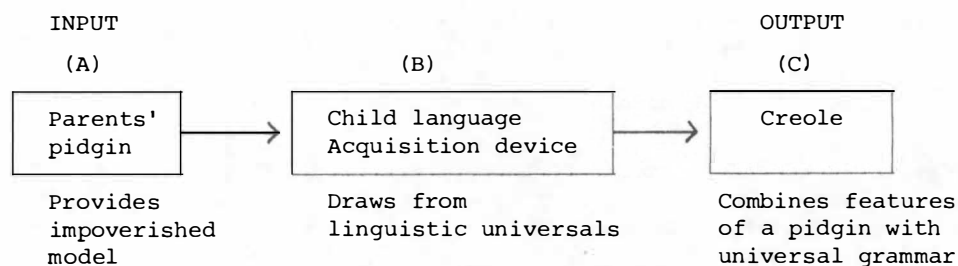


Figure 11: The process of creole acquisition
(modified from Mühlhäusler 1979:43)

The less adequate (A) is, then the more absolute dependence there is on (B) to produce (C). Bickerton (1981:4) wants to restrict tightly the specific limits of (A) — a pidgin which has not existed for a generation (and is therefore not elaborated) and no single substrate language spoken by more than 20 per cent of the population (thus reducing substrate input).

By Bickerton's set of criteria, Kriol is not a creole because Northern Territory Pidgin English had been developing for about forty years prior to 1908 and because there was a significant substratum. At the Roper River mission itself, it was probably true that no single Aboriginal language was spoken by more than 20 per cent of the population but, on the other hand, a few of these languages, such as Nunggubuyu and Rembarrnga, had a considerable body of speakers outside the mission but with whom there was interaction. It could also be argued that the Aboriginal languages had more in common with each other, semantically and pragmatically, if not always lexically, than the languages of the diverse language groups of the Hawaiian plantations which Bickerton has studied.

It is, perhaps, as noted in Chapter 3, a problem of where to draw the line. If one reduces the linguistic universals (B) in the above figure to a small or insignificant contribution and increases (A) to an elaborate pidgin and adds to it the presence of other languages in a multilingual community, it certainly becomes difficult to distinguish between what could be thought by some to be technically a creole and what could be thought by others to be no more than massive borrowing. One could agree with Bickerton (1981:2) that some languages, which arose in multilingual situations by the slow and almost imperceptible elaboration of a pidgin until it slipped unnoticed into the role of primary language, may have little claim to the status and title of 'creole'. On the other hand, there seems to be little to be gained by so restricting the definition of a creole that all those languages which have obviously arisen by the expansion of a pidgin as a consequence of a relatively sudden interruption to language transmission are excluded from consideration.

In this present study, there has been much use of the terms 'demand' and 'pressure' in connection with the choice of a pidgin to fulfil the role of a primary vernacular language. In my view these are important criteria. It was noted in Chapter 3 that whereas pidgins may expand slowly, they tend to become creoles rapidly. This is because situations of drastic language change are invariably situations of great social change. Severe breaks in linguistic traditions occur because something unexpected happens rather suddenly to society. Under such circumstances, people have to cast around for some raw materials from which to mould a new primary language, and it is necessary that the basic raw materials be the common property of the group, the lowest common denominator of shared language. If that common property is a shared pidgin, used perhaps up to this point for some other, restricted purposes, then this pidgin often becomes the obvious choice. It is then suddenly 'demanded' of the pidgin that it fulfil the role of a primary language. 'Pressure' is put on it to creolise.

Again, it was noted in Chapter 3 that despite what still appear to be the views of some creolists, the slave plantation milieu was not the only site of creolisation. On the other hand, it is true that the majority, if not all, European language-based pidgins outside Europe itself, were connected with concerted and aggressive expansionism by European powers, whether as trade, military conquest, slave plantation, invasion or settlement. Such confrontations must tend to destabilise traditional society, often irreversibly.

In these exploitative contact situations, the milieu which demanded a pidgin is often observed to become sufficiently destabilised to become a milieu which demands a new primary language. There is a certain inevitability that the pressure to fulfil this role will be placed on the pidgin. It is also in the nature of such situations that the need for the new primary language occurs suddenly and the demand placed upon the creole is immediate. A function of such immediacy is that there is more need for the creole creators to fall back on 'innate language abilities', 'bioprograms for language', 'linguistic universals' or whatever else one wishes to label the human capacity to make language, rather than to depend entirely for input on the slower process of selection and borrowing from existing raw materials.

These generalisations were arrived at by a study of the literature on creolisation, by then examining the origin of Kriol, and finally by asking what this new set of data had to say about the old theories. The history of Kriol certainly highlights the significance of a drastic break in language transmission. The death of large numbers of speakers of some languages and the gathering together of the remnants of the language groups at the Roper River mission did not create Kriol, nor did it arise merely because there was an English-based pidgin — Northern Territory Pidgin English — in use. These sociolinguistic factors did, however, combine to create a situation in which a group of children and young people were thrust together before the normal procedures for gaining multilingual competence had had sufficient time to operate.

Competence in Northern Territory Pidgin was something they shared. It was a relatively long-standing pidgin, but this does not automatically imply that it was particularly extended. It was in all ways a restricted language with restricted patterns of usage. It was all they had and pressure was placed upon that pidgin to become the primary language of their new community. It was their response to that pressure, it was what they did to the pidgin which defines what creolisation is. Over the years of its maturing, the creolised pidgin, Kriol, borrowed from English and from Aboriginal languages, but its creole status was defined by the linguistic innovation brought to bear on the scant raw materials of the pidgin to become the essential lexical and syntactic framework of a new language.

The rise of Kriol was the price of the Roper River people's safety. It is also the mirror of their history.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The purpose of this brief concluding chapter is to survey the content of the study as a whole in order to assess the extent to which it has achieved what it set out to achieve.

It was stated in the first chapter that the purpose of this research was to address some of the critical debates which surround the origin, nature, and use of Kriol. In particular, it was intended that there were three areas of significance which were to be explored. These were

1. The origin of Kriol – its place in the linguistic history of the Top End of the Northern Territory and its connection with the history and culture of its speakers.
2. The place of Kriol in the Pacific region – the way in which Kriol relates to the complex history of English-based pidgins and creoles in the Pacific region.
3. The origin of pidgins and creoles – the light which this new study of a relatively unresearched pidgin and creole history sheds on the understanding of the phenomena of the pidginisation and creolisation of languages.

This concluding discussion will outline the contribution which this research has made to each of these three areas of significance.

The origin of Kriol

The Northern Territory coastal Aboriginal speech communities had a long history of interaction with foreigners. The 'Macassan' Pidgin was spoken to the trepang traders and other South-east Asians for several centuries. The first stable English Pidgin developed at Port Essington in the 1840s, but the two major sites of pidgin development were Darwin together with its hinterland mining camps in the 1870s, and a few years later, the pastoral frontier of the inland Top End. The major lexical source of these pidgins was the Southeastern Australian Pidgin English, which had distinctive lexical features which were clearly present in the Northern Territory.

Other pidgins such as Chinese Pidgin English appear to have only temporarily influenced the lexicon. They certainly did, however, contribute to the rise of the linguistic climate in which a pidgin could develop and spread, that is, a multicultural community in need of a lingua franca. They also, no doubt,

ensured the adoption of all those universal pidgin items common to all the existing English pidgins, including both Chinese Pidgin English and Southeastern Australian Pidgin English.

Between 1880 and the turn of the century, the various English-based pidgins in the Northern Territory lost most of their distinctiveness, converging to become a widely understood Northern Territory Pidgin English, which was used for restricted purposes between European and Aboriginal people. It attained a stable form by the early 1900s. In the twentieth century, the pidgin underwent some expansion in areas where it continued to be spoken as a pidgin, and it has continued to exist as a pidgin in certain situations even today. When the scattered remnants of the massacred language groups of the Roper River region sought sanctuary at the Anglican mission on the Roper River in 1908, the children and young people needed a lingua franca. Normal language transmission had been drastically interrupted, and the creation and emergence of a daily interacting peer group of young people was an unprecedented innovation. They needed a lingua franca and they inevitably 'chose' the pidgin of Aboriginal and European communication, Northern Territory Pidgin English.

The peer group of young people, growing up together, needed more than a pidgin. They needed a full primary language, and so they commenced to creolise the pidgin, expanding it lexically, syntactically, and semantically to fulfil their communicative needs. In doing so, they made use of and manipulated the resources at their disposal. New words were coined from the morphemic and word formation resources of the pidgin, words were borrowed from English and from Aboriginal languages, and there was much semantic change, some completely innovative, some the shift from an English meaning to one more akin to the normal Aboriginal usage.

Elsewhere, Northern Territory Pidgin English remained in use as a pidgin. A stable pidgin, it maintained its essential nature and its basic lexicon. In some areas, it has been a more important language of communication than others, and so it has also expanded to fulfil additional functions. In more recent years, creolisation has occurred in a number of places, although since the original creolisation at Roper River, subsequent creolisation has not necessarily taken place in complete absence of a model.

A complex situation has thus arisen in which there is a region of Australia in which Northern Territory Pidgin English is spoken as a pidgin, with various degrees of elaboration in some communities, while under the pressure of the need of a primary language it has become creolised in others, and in yet other communities that creole has been adopted more or less as an existing language. All these developments are presented in diagram form in Figure 12.

The first and clearest creolisation of Northern Territory Pidgin English occurred at the Roper River mission. There, Kriol arose. It was the price of safety for an endangered people, but it is also the mirror of their history. Independently of language-engineering decisions by educators, politicians and other decision makers, it is fast becoming a badge of their identity.

The place of Kriol in the Pacific

The place of Kriol in the network of historical relationships of pidgins and creoles was carefully analysed. The relationship as set out by Clark (1979:48) was examined in the light of a lexical study of Northern Territory Pidgin

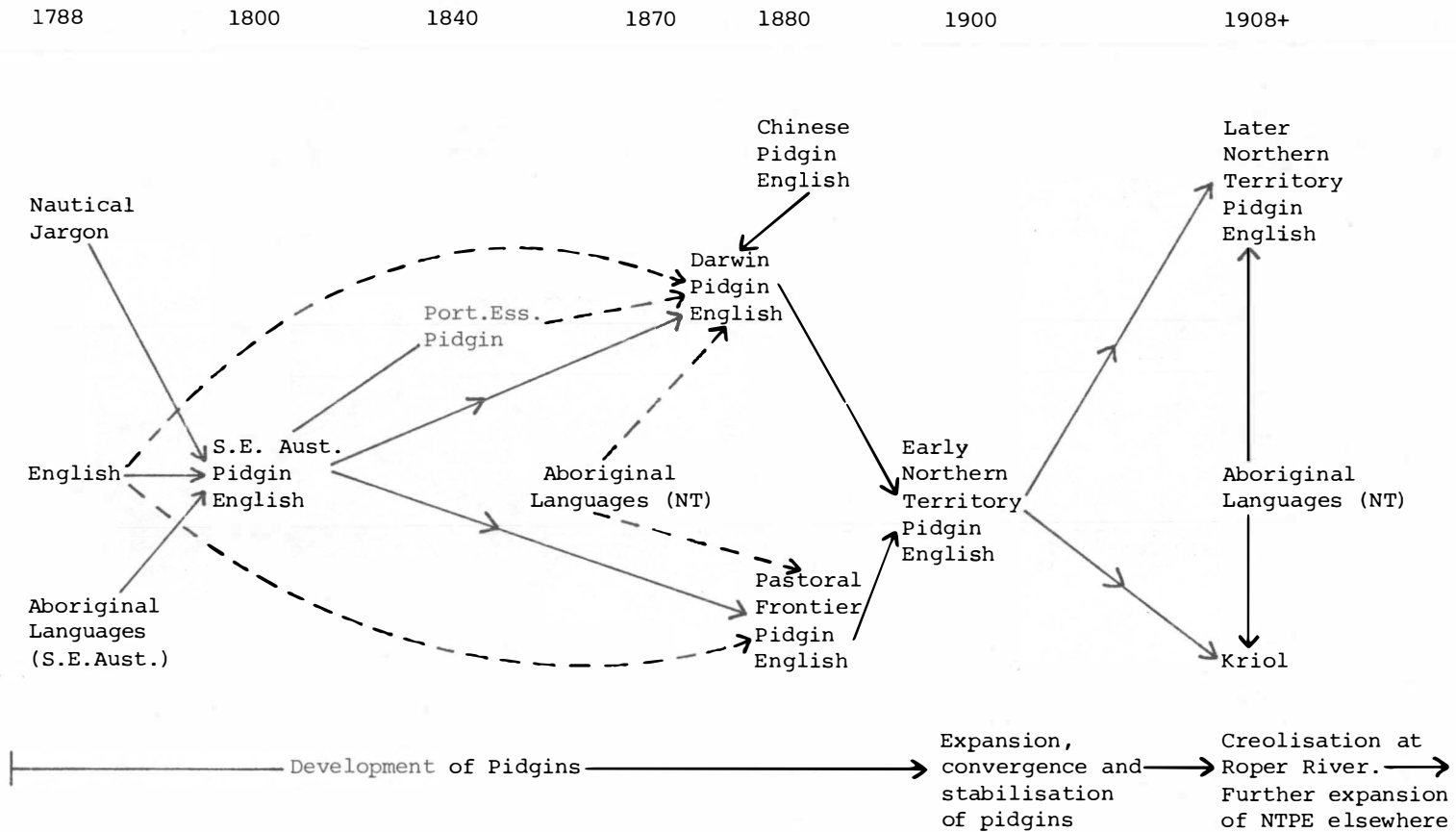


Figure 12: Historical relationships of Northern Territory Pidgin English and Kriol.

English. It was found that there was abundant evidence, both sociohistorical and linguistic, to demonstrate a connection between Southeastern Australian Pidgin English and Northern Territory Pidgin English and thus with Kriol.

On the other hand, no evidence was found to support any connection between Northern Territory Pidgin English and the pidgin of the Queensland sugar plantations. There is no substantial sociohistorical connection between the two regions, and there is no linguistic evidence indicative of any influence from coastal Queensland pidgins on the developing Northern Territory Pidgin English.

It was also demonstrated that if there were any influence from coastal Queensland on language use at Roper River mission, such influences were minor and temporary and there is no permanent evidence in modern Kriol of any link at all. What similarities there are, are due to common factors in the ancestry of the two creoles. No item specific to Torres Strait Creole or its direct antecedents is found in Kriol.

The pidginisation and creolisation of languages

It was concluded in Chapter 2 from a study of the literature on the pidginisation of languages that of all the conditions which could be or have been thought to be necessary for a pidgin to arise, three conditions are essential.

- a) The absence of effective bilingualism.
- b) The need and desire to communicate.
- c) Inadequate opportunities to learn the target language.

These three conditions were fully discussed in Chapter 9 in the light of the data concerning the history of the development of pidgins in the Northern Territory. It was found that the rise of pidgins in the Northern Territory clearly demonstrated the presence of these three conditions. It was significant that they could be seen to apply, under vastly different circumstances, both to the 'Macassan' Pidgin and to the English-based pidgins.

Simplification or 'baby-talk' theories and relexification or monogenetic theories were also reviewed in Chapter 9 in the light of the Northern Territory data. It was found that although they were inadequate as total explanations of the phenomenon of pidginisation, they did nevertheless account for some of the frequently observed features of pidgins and creoles.

With respect to creoles, it was noted in Chapter 3 that three general statements are frequently encountered. Slightly restated, three general principles emerge.

- a) Creoles arise from pidgins.
- b) Creoles arise because of a demand placed upon a pidgin to become the primary language of a new group.
- c) The process of creolisation is one of expansion and elaboration involving, in the first instance, linguistic innovation with the available raw materials.

It was shown in Chapter 11 that Kriol provided an excellent example of those criteria. In particular, Kriol showed clearly the significance of a break in language transmission and the subsequent demand placed upon a pidgin to assume

the function of a primary language. The pidgin may expand over a long period or exist in a stable form for a long period and a creolising language may take, as Kriol did, a generation to achieve maturity. The demand to creolise a pidgin, however, frequently comes suddenly. In this sense, there is almost a moment of creolisation, a brief period in which the pidgin, the restricted lingua franca of inter-group communications, becomes an embryonic creole, a new language undergoing elaboration and extension. That moment for Kriol occurred in late 1908. Before 1908, Kriol did not exist. After 1908, it had been born and embarked upon a life course of its own.

APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

PIDGIN ENGLISH EXAMPLES AS RECORDED IN THE LITERATURE

The lists below, although not claimed to be exhaustive, contain all actual recorded pidgin English speech in the Northern Territory which I have located in the literature for the whole of the nineteenth century and up to 1910. Varieties of Pidgin English such as Aboriginal and Chinese are not separately listed as many examples are problematical, but the speakers, wherever possible, are identified in column 2.

The lists include all examples of connected speech but do not contain every indirect reference to the use of a specific word. The first list contains all examples from all sources up to 1910, excluding the most detailed sources, Searcy 1909; 1912 and Gunn 1905; 1908 which are given separately as Lists 2, 3, 4 and 5.

List 1: Pidgin English examples excluding Searcy and Gunn

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
1829	Mariac of Raffles Bay to Wilson	Mute commissaree ande. <i>Good commissar dead.</i> (mixture vernacular/English)	Wilson 1835:89
1844	Aborigines to Leichhardt	Perikot, Nokot, Mankiterre, Lumbo, Lumbo, Nana Nana Nana <i>Very good, no good, Macassans</i> <i>very far</i> (mixture of English and 'Macassan' Pidgin)	Leichhardt 1847:495
1844	Aborigines to Leichhardt, 100 km from Pt Essington	Commandant. Come here. Very good. What's your name?	Leichhardt 1847:502
1844	Aborigines to Leichhardt, close to Pt Essington	You no bread, no flour, no rice, no backi — you no good! Balanda plenty bread, plenty flour, plenty backi! Balanda very good!	Leichhardt 1847:523

List 1 *continued* ...

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
1847	European question, Aboriginal reply at Pt Essington	What for you do this? What for you take guide in bush?	Keppel 1853:158
1870	Woolna Aborigines to ship's members at mouth of Adelaide River	My word ... very good ... tum-tum ... you gib me baccy ... big one ship come on. (mixed with Woolna words)	Daly 1887:41-42
1870	Larakia Aborigines in Darwin	Big one leetpee <i>big turtle</i>	Daly 1887:70
1870	Larakia Aborigines in Darwin	Woolna come on	Daly 1887:182
1873	Larakia girl to Europeans in Darwin	Charley, me like you very much, give me banana ... Harry, me like you so much, give me 'Tom Tom'.	Wildey 1876:118
1873	Darwin Aborigines	How many day Christmas come on? Big one tumtum, that one very good.	NTTG 1873:26 Dec.
1881 to 1886	Various	(Numerous examples from Searcy's books are separately listed in part 2 of this appendix)	Searcy 1909; 1912
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	Looke heah! — you cally me hof way, I cally you udder hof — Hay? I say; when you wantum lay down, you lettee me know. I wantum takee my legs out.	Sowden 1882:52
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	No savee	Sowden 1882:54
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	Missa Gennelmen — We welly glad a see him you come heah. We wantum nish one. Spose live in Queenslan', Wictolea, Sydney, him Chinamen get him plenty gold; sposm' no gold, him all yite, him plantation — savee — altee same money — welly good — hay? We wantum altee same.	Sowden 1882:75
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	Him welly good fella? ... Yah, Yah; all yite	Sowden 1882:75

List 1 *continued* ...

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
1882	Chinese man to Sowden who replies	I spose him talkee welly good jush now? What him mean? You savee him? You welly good fellow; me likum you.	Sowden 1882:76
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	My countleeman likee fahm nish countlee allee same Englishman; takee up lan', glow lice, savee fahm, hey? 'Nish one new countlee. Chinee notting do. Must findum somethin' do. Him wantum Gov'nment givee land glow lice allee same Englishman. How muchee money, Missee Palsons, Sir, you chahgee Chinee piecee lan? Allee yight. Me tlink ten tousan' Chinee longa Tellitoly two t'lee year. We make nish place allee same Singapo	Sowden 1882:76
1882	Aboriginal boy to Sowden, Adelaide River	No savee ... what fellow make him ... 'cause I tink him too muchee big fellow fool.	Sowden 1882:110
1882	Aboriginal man to Sowden	... Debbil-debbil ... him you friend?	Sowden 1882:111
1882	Chinese Pidgin English	What for you holdie me? Leavee go. I only go out post him letter.	Sowden 1882:138
1882	Miranda of Larakia to Sowden	Yessee. Big fellow savee ... My word! All about.	Sowden 1882:144
1886	Carrington questions Roper man who replies	what name, you me Lowrie, me savee Roper.	Carrington 1886:64
c.1888	Aboriginal man to Kelsey	'Im bin bustem up. I bin lendem longa Timbuk, my brother. Timbuk wantem shoot kangaroo. 'Im taken my gun and long time no more come back. Some blackfella go lookout Timbuk and bin findem Timbuk dead. That one gun goodfella gun, but Timbuk bin loadem too much and 'im busted. Blackfella bin see 'im track where Timbuk bin folla old man kangaroo, where 'im sit down dead. More further kangaroo sit dow. 'Im bin dead too.	Kelsey 1975:76

List 1 *continued* ...

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
c.1888	Aboriginal man to Kelsey	I likem that one. 'Im gottem good fella smell	Kelsey 1975:79
c.1890	Larakia man to Parkhouse	(re totem animals) That one my father This one my father <u>godloa</u> (truly); that fellow no belong to me See that fellow. Him my father That all right; him my father, this one another father. White fellow no savee.	Parkhouse 1895:640
c.1890	Larakia man speaks to Parkhouse who asks question	Suppose me a lubra, that one my husband? What name that blackfellow? Oh him blackfellow	Parkhouse 1895:640
c.1890	Larakia man to Parkhouse	Suppose that fellow a girl, him my wife	Parkhouse 1895:640
c.1890	Larakia people to Parkhouse	(explaining kinship system) That one him <u>mollinnyu</u> (married man) Him have two-fellow lubra. That fellow lubra have em <u>nimm</u> (boy) By-and-by him catch him lubra, him have em <u>nimm</u> . Him lubra have em <u>bun-ngilla</u> (girl). By-and-by girl big fellow, him <u>naowa</u> (husband) catch him, him <u>melog</u> (pregnant) have em <u>bun-ngilla</u> (girl). By-and-by <u>nimm</u> big fellow, by-and-by <u>bun-ngilla</u> big fellow, him catch him.	Parkhouse 1895:641
c.1890	Larakia man to Parkhouse	Steamer, him come on; him sit down lame fellow ... blackfellow him make 'em smoke, blackfellow been tell 'em	Parkhouse 1895:646
c.1890	Larakia man to Parkhouse	blackfellow, him sabe	Parkhouse 1895:647
c.1895	Aborigines to Willshire, Victoria River	My word, good fellow longa you	Willshire 1896:12
c.1895	Aboriginal women	You wantem lubra; you gib it shillen'	Willshire 1896:15
c.1895	Aboriginal boy to Willshire	No you shootem that one; me thinkem that fellow my father	Willshire 1896:17
c.1895	Aborigines to Willshire	You yabber all the same blackfellow	Willshire 1896:87

List 1 continued ...

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
1902	Various	(Numerous examples from Gunn's books are separately listed in part 3 of this appendix)	Gunn, 1905; 1908
1905	Daly River man and Gee	Might be I whistle-sing him No more. More better you sing him out.	Gee 1926:21
1906	Roper River Aboriginal Dick, to Giles	Me sabee you, you Mr. Giles long time boss longa Springvale? Him close up been shootem me, me bin thinkit might be him come back more shootem.	Giles 1906:95
1909	Chinese shopkeeper	You wantem plicter taken? Me takem all plicter! Welly good, eh? ... one pong one dossen. Welly cheap, eh? All li. You wantem blead, you wantem fish, you wantem plicter, all li, you come see me, all li, Goo-bye.	Birtles 1909:136
1909	Roper River men at mission	Him funny fella man. Him plenty savvy fella play leg. Good fella him.	Reid 1909 in Higgins 1981:23
1909	King Bob of Roper River at mission	'Im Jesus been talk to me last night	Reid 1909 in Higgins 1981:22
1909	King Bob of Roper River at mission	Jesus come down alonga me — me no 'fraid now	Huthnance 1909:1092
1909	Gee and Jack (Pine Creek) re fall from horse	No more you bin hurt Me bin hurted longa leg and longa benjy No more, you all right, back up that fella again quick time Him all right now	Gee 1926:24
1909	Jack (Pine Creek) and Gee	All same longa gaol You been longa goal? Me bin Fanny Bay Gaol long time, four moons might be	Gee 1926:25
1909	Jack (Pine Creek) and Gee	No more you bin go dead boss No more. No more, Jack my boy, and by an' bye, 'nother day, we go back longa Pine Creek all right	Gee 1926:32

List 1 *continued* ...

DATE	CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	SOURCE
1910	Jack (Pine Creek) and Gee	You bin <u>poonarie</u> (the very best) boss to me, sar You bin good fella boy to me, Jack Might be you come back 'nother day? Might be and you'll be my boy again	Gee 1926:33

Other pidgin quotations in Gee (1926) are not recorded here as they relate to the far south of the Northern Territory, outside the area of interest of this study. The following lengthy narrative, although recorded on the Tanami goldfields, was, however, that of Jack, from Pine Creek, who accompanied Gee there.

Suppose blackfeller bin take away gin belong ole man or any man and then him go away long way, nother place altogether. Ole man very sorry, very cross that gin go away; so him tell other boss blackfeller him mates. Him yabber longa them. Then they go longa bush and get um mud, wet mud longa bush. Sometime white mud, sometime black mud, him work him up like him make um damper, then him make um thing all same a froaig (frog) all same white fellow dough. Make um head, make um two arms, make um benjy (stomach), make um two legs; then him put it long a sun. All blackfellow sing all the time. Before him make um mud him bin make big fire all same bake um damper, then spread out fire, then him take um mud thing put him longa middle fire and cover him up — then go away. All the time they bin sing to twofeller little star that away (south), to watch after blackfeller that take um gin.

This blackfeller, him away; him play about him all right, bye and bye him go cranky longa head. That fire, that mud, that star catch him. Next morning him feel all right. By and bye him say 'Mee too much cold, want um big feller fire'; him lay down there — too hot. Him go way longa bush, lay down; and then came back again longa fire. Then him get too hot again, and say 'shift um fire back little bit', and then him go fast asleep. Star ready catch um now, and fire come along and burn him leg big. Him wake up and sing out. Other blackfeller sorry, but him say other blackfeller long way off bin make um mud, and him die. Then by and bye him get bad; no more eat um tucker and him die.
(Gee 1926:35-36)

List 2: Pidgin English examples from Searcy (1909)

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Aboriginal man in Darwin	O, you too muchee gammon O Mr _____, my word, too muchee money	37
'Flash Poll' Aboriginal woman at Pt Essington	Give it tobacco, give it nobbler	58
Pt Essington Aborigine	Lookout, him bite you dead	62
Pt Essington Aborigine	I see one fellow proa	91
Roper River Aborigine	Look, Bungawah	157
(General quotation)	What for you killem me along a head?	191
Chinese cook on <i>S.S. Adelaide</i>	All li, captain, only chin, chin, Joss	198
Alligator River Aborigine in Darwin	My word, suppose that one young strong pfeller alligator, me die quick — that one old pfeller — no more too much strong, quick pfeller	270
Aboriginal man	My word, all same Chinaman	335
Chinese man in Pine Creek mine	Say, Mr Sears, what for that man along Pine Creek — fool. What for him spend forty thousand pounds topside? More better spend him along bottomside first time	337
Darwin Aborigine	My word, good fellow	348

List 3: Pidgin examples from Searcy (1912)

Unless otherwise stated, the speaker is one of Searcy's Port Essington Aboriginal assistants, designated Pt E A in the list below.

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Pt E A	All same blackfellow's country (explanation of meaning of 'Macassan' term, Marege)	23
Pt E A	Him stop here, him sit down, him turn (<i>tracking</i>)	35,36
Pt E A	Look out, Captain, big fellow shark sit down	41
Pt E A	You come, Captain, me show you round	47
Pt E A	My word, Captain, buffalo close up killem'	53

List 3 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Pt E A	Captain, you see buffalo, you more better shoot alonga tail; no good killem alonga head too much bone all same wood sit down	55
Pt E A	Captain you killem dead good fellow	56
Pt E A	all same old man (re goose call)	60
Pt E A	piccaninny way (<i>short distance</i>)	67
Pt E A	Captain, what for you get em lost alonga bush and no take me?	70
Pt E A	My word, Captain that fellow good (re use of gun barrels as water containers)	71
Pt E A	Billy, my word big fellow alligator killem buffalo down along creek ... alligator alonga creek killem horse	73
Pt E A	Him come ... good fellow tucker ... all same hen eggs, Captain.	74
Pt E A	Captain you come along Mangrove Creek and see me catch em crab ... more better bring gun, big fellow alligator sit down ... by-em-by catchem crab, stick him alonga bank. You see.	75
Pt E A	Good fellow water, plenty walk (<i>good low tide</i>)	76
Pt E A	Shootem, Captain, shootem	76
Pt E A	Captain you take piccaninny gun, good fellow killem dead (<i>revolver</i>)	80
Pt E A	Captain, you like to see way blackfellow catchem fish, no line, no more spear. Alright, we been go longa jungle first time.	87
Pt E A	Look out, Captain him bite you dead. Him very bad fellow, him bite tumble down quick fellow	87
Pt E A	Give em more fish, Captain	89
Pt E A	Jungle fowl sit down there. My word, old man sit down.	90
Pt E A	Captain go away, give it knife, it cutem head	94
Pt E A	Boss, quick, Manialucum me been catch em, quick boss (re capture of man named Manialucum)	104
Pt E A	Captain, blackfellow Alligator, me think it	105
Pt E A	All same Billy	107
Chinese Pidgin English	Allee samee shut up! Savee? Allee samee dead pig! (Chinese man threatening Searcy)	116

List 3 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Chinese Pidgin English	No savee	118
Chinese Pidgin English	You catchem whitefella lubra quilebeck	120
Chinese Pidgin English	Eye no have got, no can see	121
Chinese Pidgin English	You makee write chit along steamer, wharfy go look see one piece blanket all samee from flend He He He ... whafor Custom House man say one piece old Wharfy man lascal? No more lascal, welly good man.	123
Chinese Pidgin English	Welly bad man	124
European to Aborigine	(Gaoler translating death sentence to Aboriginal prisoner) You see em that big fella white man? Him say you bin killem dead alonga Chinaman. Him big fella man say by-em-by plenty fella policeman takem once piecee blackfella along bush long way then one fella white man putem rope alonga blackfella's neck, him been throwem rope alonga tree, pull-em blackfella up, blackfella by-em-by tumble down dead.	127
Pt E A	Woolnas all about killem along camp.	131
Pt E A	By-em-by another fella blackfella walk along, him been see em alligator, him bin catchem tobacco all about	156
Pt E A	My word, Captain, big one fight here longa Gimlet	159
?	My word, all same Chinaman	165
Pt E A	Macassar man go away quickfella. Big fella growl alonga black me think it. Bad fella sit down.	167
Pt E A	Captain, all about ready, me been makem tea ... plenty water sit down ... no more sea, good fellow drink	169
Pt E A	What for Captain you been catchem big snake and no more have blackfella with you? Him been killem Captain	171

List 3 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Pt E A	My word, Captain, big fella kill him all about	171
Pt E A	No more me think it ... that fella snake been piccaninny, him been come alonga wood from over there. Blackfella alonga Pt Essington say Macassar man have to catchem wood, no more good fella sit down along island	172
European question Pt E A reply	Good fella tucker that big fella snake, Boom. No more, Captain, me been chuck him alonga sea.	172
Pt E A	(translating smoke signals) My word, blackfella sit down all about. Him bin yabber another fella blackfella long way. Sun sit down piccaninny time, no more blackfella walk	173
Pt E A	No more, all about like this	173
Pt E A	No more jump up, Captain, no more sing out. Two fella proas sit down. Macassar man me think it, big fella growl alonga blackfellow. Him bin killem all about.	176
Pt E A	Two fella proas been come piccaninny daylight. Two fella canoe plenty blackfellow been walk along. Plenty big fella noise. Plenty growl me think it.	176
Pt E A	(Translating from 'Macassan' pidgin) Him been say blackfella bin killem Malay all about all same Malay killem blackfella	179
Chinese Pidgin English	Allee samee me, me allee samee Chin Chin Joss	182
Pt E A	Macassar captain sit down. Moyaut him bin tellem me. Long time him walk alonga proa. Him camp here. Blackfella growl and killem Captain and cook. Him take all about tucker and run alonga bush. Malay man then put Captain alonga hole	191
Pt E A	Look out, Captain, him big fella growl. Him killem all about, me think it. Him got spear along toe	196
Pt E A	Alright him been see em, boat allabout come	217
Pt E A	Canoe sit down, me think it ... Piccaninny time him get dark, me swim. No been see em more alligator ... me been gotem	237
Pt E A	Them fella black all about killem Malay	239
Pt E A	My word, they been killem alright	239

List 4: Pidgin English examples from Gunn (1905): [Quotations from 1955 ed.]

The most frequent speakers are the Mangarayi girl Bett-Bett, Jeannie Gunn and the Mangarayi elder Ebimel Woolloomool also called Goggle Eye. They are designated BB, JG and EW in the list below.

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
European stockman to BB	Hullo! What name you	2
JG to BB	Nang ah! piccaninny <i>come here, piccaninny</i> (mixture of Mangarayi and English)	3
BB to JG	me plenty savey Engliss, Missus!	3
BB to JG	S'pose skeeto comon, him bite mud, him no more bite meself	3
BB to JG	No more ... big mob bin sing out, sing out	4
BB to JG	Me knock up longa Shimmy Shirts ... Longa string ... me bin make em.	10
BB to JG	bogey <i>bath</i> him bite eye belonga me (re soap)	11
EW to JG	Me bin knock up longa trousa	13
BB to JG	Can't longa Goggle Eye ... Can't Missus ... Goggle Eye little bit father belonga me	15/16
BB to JG	Must, Missus, straightfellow	16
EW to JG	S'pose me look, Debbil-debbil take away eye s'pose me listen, Debbil-debbil take away ear; s'pose me talk, Debbil-debbil take away tongue.	16
EW to JG	Him bin come on first time, me bin come on beehind	17
EW to JG	S'pose me shut him eye quickfellow, that all right.	17
JG to EW	You blackfellows plenty savey	17
EW to JG	Missus, me bin spill him water longa flour ... you eye, me bin spilt him, Missus ... Missus me bin spill him nuzzer time.	17/18
BB to JG	You too muchee little fellow, Misus!	19
BB to JG	No more Missus. Me goodfellow; s'pose you no more make me whitefellow longa paint	20
BB to JG	You eye, Missus; straightfellow ... No more Missus; straightfellow	21
EW to JG	All day likee that	23(43)
EW to JG	Me king alright.	23
JG replies	My word! I think you big mob King	

List 4 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
EW to JG	Me plenty savey corroboree ... me savey all about corroboree	24
EW to JG	Big mob sit down longa me	24
JG to EW	What name this one talk, Goggle Eye?	25
EW to JG	Jenning-gherrie come on (re bird)	25
BB to JG	Him twofellow hands, Missus	26
BB to JG	Him there, Missus ... I bin hear him sing-sing	27
? JG to BB	Which way whitefellow sit down, Missus?	27
JG to Aboriginal women	No more all day playabout	30
Aboriginal man to JG	My word, Missus! ... big mob hair sit down longa you cobra	33
Aboriginal people to JG	Him piccaninny Rainbow alright	34
EW to JG	Missus, s'pose you come longa Debbil-debbil dance, eh? ... this one gammon Debbil-debbil	37
Aboriginal man to JG	Me Debbil-debbil alright, me real fellow	38
EW to JG	Me bin talk	39
EW to JG	Him goodfellow stick, that one	42
EW to JG	Missus, me bin lose 'em pipe	45
JG replies	Here you are, Goggle Eye, me bin good fellow, me bin find him.	
BB to JG	My word, Missus, Sue plenty savey, him close up whitefellow	47
BB to JG	What name likee this, likee this, likee this	47
BB to JG	... paper yabber ... what name him yabber, Missus, this one 'A' Him talk sugar-bag, this one 'B' This one eye	48
BB to JG who asks question	Missus, I bin find bullocky What name? Bullocky ... him all day sit down longa bullocky	49
BB to JG	Me knock up longa paper yabber, Missus, him silly fellow	49
BB to JG	Missus, this one no more 'A' Me savey. This one mumma; this one piccaninny	49

List 4 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
BB to JG	Look Missus! Piccaninny belonga mumma "A" sit down by meself ... You go home longa you mumma ... cheeky fellow longa me ... My word! You bad fellow alright. Debbil-debbil catch you dreckly Look Missus, him goodfellow now	50/51
Aboriginal women to JG who questions, they reply	Missus! Bett-Bett bin kill Rolly; him bin kill him longa quart-pot What name you all day gammon, eh? Straightfellow Missus. Bett-Bett bin kill Rolly alright.	51/52
Rolly to JG	Bett-Bett bin kill me Missus! Straightfellow! me no more talk gammon	52
Aboriginal women to JG	Me no more bin talk kill him dead fellow. Me bin talk kill him longa quart pot	52
BB to JG	My word, Missus, neenel bin kill finger belonga me	52
BB to JG	Me bin long time kill him	53
JG talks with Jimmy	(re message stick) What name Jimmy Yabber stick What name him talk My word, Jimmy! You plenty savey. Me no more savey yabber stick. I think you close up savey whitefellow paper-yabber, Jimmy This one stick, him yabber boomerang	54/55
Aboriginal women to JG	Cheeky fellow snake sit down. Cheeky fellow snake Missus	56
JG to BB who replies	What name, Bett-Bett? Me put him longa Nellie bed	56
Aboriginal person	Cheeky fellow snake sit down longa Nellie bed	56
BB (to hens)	Go and lay 'em egg, silly fellow you.	58
Aboriginal woman	Me knock up longa me boy, him all day krowl-krowl	60
BB to JG	My word, me race quickfellow Crocodiles all day knock up longa egg	60/61
Aboriginal man to JG	Missus, s'pose me make you blackfellow fire, eh? Me bin finnissem, Missus	63/64
BB to JG, who answers BB replies	Missus, which way you bin put him egg belonga crocodile Might it Sue bin catch him, eh? No more Missus! You bin put him longa office. Track belonga you sit down	65

List 4 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Jimmy to JG	Blackfellow smoke bin talk, boy bin send him	67
BB to JG	That one hen no more broody now, Missus.	68
BB to JG	S'pose me no more break him, him break meself all about	68
BB to JG	Me no more frightened fellow longa Missus; me all say savey Boss playabout. Me no more run long way	76
Aboriginal women to JG	Him Maluka! ... him track belong Maluka; him bogey last night.	78
BB to JG	Missus no more savey track belonga Boss.	78
BB to JG	Missus! Mussus! Sue bin break him arm. Stone bin kill him.	79
Aboriginal women to JG	You eye. Him Monkey longa Willeroo	80
BB to JG	Me too muchee all day bone fellow	82
BB to JG	Blackfellow bin finnissem, Missus	83
BB to JG	Missus, I think bigfellow blackfellow close up finnissem, that one moon	83
BB to JG	S'pose me moon, me stay in my country; me no more silly-fellow	84
BB to JG	Look, Missus. Littlefellow star come on now. Him look this way. Him look that way. Him talk which way sun sit down Sun bin go away alright Him bin hear me, Missus. Straightfellow! Him bin hear me ... Might it God bin make star longa you country, Missus?	84/85
JG to BB	You eye, God bin make my star	85
EW to JG	Too muchee jump-up jump-up, too muchee jump-down, jump-down, me all day barcoo (re seasickness)	86
BB to JG	Blackfellow bin make this one mob star, Missus Bigfellow God all day look out longa you, Missus	86
BB to JG	Missus! Missus! Topsy bin catch newfellow piccaninny boy	87
Aboriginal women to JG	You eye, him bin catch him alright. Topsy bin talk, s'pose Missus come one, give piccaninny whitefellow name.	87

List 4 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
JG questions Aboriginal women who reply	What name, Topsy? Him close up whitefellow, I think. No more, Missus, him blackfellow alright. All day likee that, Missus	88
Aboriginal people to JG	Tonald! Him goodfellow name, that one	89
Jimmy to JG	By-and-by me make him grow, Missus	89
Topsy to JG	Look, Missus. Him close up blackfellow now	90
Charlie to JG	Whitefellow chuck 'em water longa piccaninny	90
Charlie to Catholic priest probably in Queensland	No more, this one fish alright You bin chuck 'em water longa me, you bin call me Charlie. Alright me bin chuck 'em water longa beef, me bin call fish	91
Charlie to JG	My word, Missus! You cheeky fellow alright	92
Charlie to JG	Me plenty savey ... me savey count allabout Me savey. Me bin hear him talk-talk longa Daly Waters. Him bite alright, that one little fellow Debbil-debbil.	92/93
Jimmy to other men	My word, whitefellow plenty savey	93
BB to JG	Him gammon piccaninny I think	94
Billy to JG	Milk close up finissem	95
EW to JG	Blackfellow bin sing me deadfellow long bush. Flour-bag bin come on quickfellow longa me cobra	96
EW to JG	My word, Missus, you close up blow him all away	100
BB to JG	My word, Missus! That one goodfellow stink all right	101
BB to JG	Missus! Me sickfellow, I think	105
BB to JG	Missus, me want walkabout. No more longa you, Missus, longa blackfellow	106
BB to JG	Me no more savey, Missus	106

List 5: Pidgin English examples from Gunn (1908): [Quotations from 1954 ed.]
(Jeannie Gunn abbreviated to JG)

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Jackaroo to JG	White fellow, big-fellow-fool allright Missus bin help me allright	21
Aboriginal women to JG	... knocked up longa scrub ...	51
Jimmy to JG	Him knock up longa all about work	52
Goggle Eye to JG	Me big mob frightened fellow longa wild blackfellow	69
Aboriginal men to JG	My word! Missus big mob cheecky fellow all right	69
Aboriginal woman to JG	... me boy all day krowl	70
Sam (Chinese) to stockmen	Tea bin finnissem all about	78
EW to Europeans	Might it catch raisins nuzzer time	79
Goggle Eye to Europeans	Me bin catch traveller. Me bin come back two fellow sleep	80
Goggle Eye to JG	Me all day knock up longa horse	88
Cheon to JG	Me new cook! Me Cheon ... Me savey all about. Me savey cook 'im and gard'in', and milk 'im, and chuckie and fishin' and shootin' wild duck ... Me sit down? Eh boss?	92/93
Jimmy to Cheon who replies	Me wild fellow, blackfellow. Me myall fellow Me myall fellow, too	94
Cheon	Fowl sing out! That way! Catch 'im egg. Go on. What's er matter! Fowl sit down close up kitchen.	95
Cheon to JG	Him too muchee little fellow No good that way, missus! Me savey all about. White woman no good savey gard'n'	96
Rosy to JG	Me savey scrub im and sweep 'im and wash 'im and blue 'im and starch 'im	98
Cheon to JG	Bullocky jump four miles	100
Cheon	New fellow tea, I think	105
Cheon to Maluka	My word, boss! Missus plenty savey. Chinaman woman no more savey like that My word, boss. Hear him sing-out, sing-out. Missus plenty savey	113
Cheon	Bullocky come on	113

List 5 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Cheon to JG	My word! That one good-looking. Him close up sixty pound longa China.	
Cheon	Him gold. Me savey gold allright. Me live longa California long time Him sing out all a same silver Big mob book Him silly fellow? Eh, boss? Boss bin talk silly fellow Plenty room sit down longa box	115
Maudie to JG	Debbil-debbil sit down No more touch him, missus! S'pose you touch him all about there come on quickfellow. Me bin see him! My word him race!	
Nellie to Aboriginal women	Tree all day walkabout ... come on big fellow ...	120
Nellie	Me sit down first time	121
Cheon to JG	What's er matter? Missus no more stockrider	135
Bett Bett to JG	Me all day dust 'im paper, me round 'im up goat. Me sit down all right	180
Cheon to JG	What's er matter? Me savey grow cabbage ... paper yabber ... My word, me plenty cross fellow	181
Aboriginal people to Europeans	Black fellow plenty savey	193
Aboriginal men to stockman	Big mob bad fellow blackfellow sit down longa island	196
Cheon	Dinner! Missus! Boss! All about! Pussy-cat been tuck-out custard What name all about laugh, Missus	213/214
Cheon	What's er matter! Him too muchee heavy fellow. S'pose him little fellow, me chuck him all right	214/215
Cheon	My word. Me close up smash him Cognac	215
Cheon	Boss bin knock glass longa me one time	217
Cheon	Must have pullet longa Clisymus ... must have big poodinn, and almond and Clisymus cake and mince pie. Must have top-fellow Clisymus longa Elsey. No good two-fellow dinner longa Clisymus Must have Vealer longa black fellow Clisymus	222

List 5 *continued* ...

CONTEXT	PIDGIN EXAMPLE	PAGE
Cheon to JG	Him close up ripe, missus. Him sing-out Him savey all about. Him plenty savey gardin'	225
Cheon	You think him jump-up longa dinner-time, eh boss? Me make him three o'clock longa night-time	229
Cheon to JG	My word, missus. That one beer plenty jump-up	233
Cheon	My word, me close up gobble him	234

APPENDIX B

PIDGIN ENGLISH IN TWO COURT CASES

Eyewitness records of court cases involving Aboriginal witnesses provide the longest examples of connected sequential speech in Pidgin English. An excellent example in the literature was recorded in 1902 by Spencer (1928: 590-592) and another interesting case from a somewhat later period (1913) in Masson (1915:165-177).

Borroloola Court House 1902

Scene: the Court House, Borroloola.

Present: two magistrates, two constables, one native prisoner, three native witnesses, Charlie, Peter, George, an audience consisting of one white man.

The constable laid the charge briefly as follows:

"You been steal 'em potatoes along garden, all same fifteen shillings. Then you been carry 'em away."

Calls up first witness.

"Your name Charlie?"

"Yes, me Charlie all right."

"You tell 'em straight-fellow longa these gentlemen, no tell 'em lies. You work longa Mr. Price. You work 'em yesterday longa garden?"

"Yes, me been go longa potato yesterday, longa Mr. Price."

"You been see 'em anyone track?"

"Yes, me been see 'em that one fellow track" (pointing to prisoner).

"You savee him track?"

"Yes, me plenty savee."

"You been see 'em which way him dig up potato?"

"Yes, me been see 'em, then me been follow 'em up that one track longa garden. Then him go outside longa little fellow road, then him go longa camp."

"You quite sure you plenty savee track?"

"Oh, yes, me plenty savee, all right."

Calls up second witness.

"Now, Peter, you talk straight-fellow longa these gentlemen. You countryman longa this boy?" (pointing to prisoner).

"Yes, me countryman all right."

"You remember another night, this boy and 'doctor'" (name of escaped culprit) "been sleep along camp?"

"Yes, me plenty savee."

"Well, what name him been do first time?"

"First time him sleep, then him wake up. Moon longa top of sky. Him say you and me go longa Price potato. Doctor been first time yabber this. Me no been go. Then two fellow walk. By and by him come back. Him been bring 'em three fellow bag longa potato. Doctor been carry 'em two fellow bag, him " (pointing to prisoner) "been carry one fellow. Two fellow been sit down and tuck out." (Witness avoided any suggestion that he had partaken of the feast, and the constable discreetly asked no question, the truthful answering of which might involve the admission that the witness was an accessory after the fact.) "Him been first time leave 'em one fellow bag longa old man alligator camp. By and by him take 'em two fellow bag longa crossing" (i.e. the creek). "Two fellow been go self longa crossing, me no been go."

Calls up third witness.

"Now, George, you yabber straight-fellow, no tell 'em lies."

"All right, Mr. Stott, me yabber straight-fellow."

"You been go along crossing yesterday?"

"Yes, me been go along crossing all right."

"Well, you tell 'em these two gentlemen what you been see."

"Me been see 'em two fellow track."

"What name him been do?"

"Him been sit down make 'em fire."

"You been see anything along creek?"

"Yes, me been see 'em two fellow bag potato. One fellow been bring 'em up, then him been chuck 'em down first time. By and by him been make 'em fire, cook 'em."

The witness retired.

Presiding magistrate to prisoner: "You been hear 'em what blackfellow been say?"

"Yes, me been hear 'em all right."

"What name? You been steal 'em that potato?"

"Yes, me been steal 'em all right."

"What name? Me send you longa Port Darwin or you sit down here?"

"Me sit down here."

Magistrate solemnly pronounces sentence: "No good blackfellow steal 'em potato. Suppose 'em blackfellow steal 'em, white fellow sulky. You sit down two fellow moon longa gaol, work 'em. Suppose you steal 'em more you sit down big fellow time longa Port Darwin."

The prisoner was then marched off to assist his fellow-culprit sentenced a few weeks before, in the work of adding his quota to the station heap of firewood and watering the cabbages.

Darwin Court House 1913

The first witness was called — Ada — and Ada came slowly walking in and climbed into the witness-box. She was a short, stout lubra, dressed in a blue cotton frock, and a red handkerchief round her neck, curly-haired, with sad eyes, like a dear old retriever dog. Ada not being sufficiently enlightened to kiss the book, the oath was administered to her by the Judge, who said, pointing to the prisoners, "now, Ada, you savvy those blackfella there?"

"Yaas, me savvy."

"You see those white gentlemen there?" (motioning towards the Jury).

"Yaas, me see 'em."

"All right, Ada. Now, you tell those gentlemen all you savvy about those blackfella. And you talk straight fella."

"Yaas."

"And loud fella."

"Yaas."

Then Ada began to give her evidence as composedly as if she were an expert witness, waiting for the Judge to take down his notes, turning patient eyes on him until he had done so, and explaining points again and again. Gradually, under examination by Counsel for the Crown, the story pieced itself together.

Ada was not a Junction Bay lubra, but came from Hodgson Downs, farther inland, and she and her "Benjamin", Charlie, had worked for Jim Campbell "four fella rain".

"That night, all about take kinoo (canoe) go long Alla" (the native name for Junction Bay). She held up a black hand and began to count on her fingers those that were of the party. "Jim Campbell, Charlie, Dick, Tom Carpenter, old King, old Jinnie, liddle fella Jackie, Nellie, Fred, lubra b'longa him, me, thass all. Bimeby night come. No more moon. Dark fella night. Some fella stop longa camp, some fella go long creek, lookout trepang. All about catchem light, paper-bark light. Jim Campbell got liddle fella light. He work longa Nellie, liddle fella Jackie, Dick, Tom Carpenter. Uzzar fella work uzzer side creek. Bimeby Dick go longa kinoo catchem uzzer fella light for Jim Campbell."

Then came the tale of the sudden attack by myalls. "Blackfella come up, him sing out, 'Ar-r-rh', like dat. Jim Campbell sing out 'O-oh', like dat. Him race, then him fall down. All about race longa camp. Bimeby Dick, Tom Carpenter catchem rifle, revolver, go back longa creek, bring Jim Campbell back longa camp. Bimeby Dick, Tom Carpenter catchem rifle, revolver, go back longa

creek, bring Jim Campbell back longa camp. Him dead fella. Blood here, blood here." Slowly she described the wounds, which of them were made with stone spears, and which with a canoe paddle, touching her own head and arms with light deliberate fingers. The camp mourned over the dead body, and then, "We takem out cloes, shirt, red naga. Bimeby catchem new cloes, white shirt, khaki trousers. Wrappen longa blanket, longa tent-fly, puttem longa lugger."

Here her account ended, for she was not one of those who sailed in the lugger to King River to be present at the burial. Before she left the box, the Counsel for the Defence rose and asked her if she had known old man Nadjimo, who once worked with Jim Campbell.

"Yaas, me savvy him before." And the story of Nadjimo then came out. "Jim Campbell growl longa old man Nadjimo. Bimeby he killem (hit him) longa back, takem dis way (by his leg and arm), puttem longa boiler (boiler for trepang), takem out and killem longa ground all day. Nadjimo close up dead fella. Me say, 'What for you do dat longa old fella?'"

"And what did Jim Campbell say?"

"Nussing."

With that she left the box, and made way for the next witness, Nellie, a pathetically thin, ugly little lubra, whose mouth was disfigured by a large scar.

"Which way you get that scar, Nellie?" she was asked.

"Jim Campbell bin give it me."

"What for?"

"Because I no more look out buffalo hide."

Nellie was one of those who had been searching for trepang close beside Jim Campbell, and she claimed to have recognised two of the attacking blacks, Nundah and Angudyea.

"You bin see 'em longa your eye?"

"Ter-ue, me bin see 'em longa my eye."

When we arrived on the second day a myall lubra was in the witness-box, her baby was howling outside, and Ada was acting as interpreter. Ada stood between the Judge's bench and the box, turning from one to another, uttering first a rapid staccato rush of aboriginal words, listening to the frightened murmurs of the myall, then repeating in low gutturals to the Judge.

On this night, the myalls had all been sitting in their own camp.

"Where sun?" asked the counsel.

This was repeated to the myall lubra, who pointed low on the western wall.

"Close up sun go down," explained Ada.

Then, after describing which myalls were in camp, she further related: "Lamareebie say, 'You'n me go killem that one cheeky fella Jim Campbell. He bin killem my brudder before.' All about put on white paint. Bimeby," continued Ada, interpreting, "all about bin come back. Bin talk longa me bin killem that one cheeky fella Jim Campbell longa stone spear."

"Who bin talk?"

"Him bin talk himself."

"Lamareebie bin talk?"

"Yaas, Lamareebie bin talk," — as much as to say, "You old fool, you know perfectly well who bin talk."

Thus her evidence and that of the lubra who followed definitely incriminated some of the prisoners, for it disclosed their own frank avowal of what had been done ...

Three of the prisoners, against whom there was no evidence, were discharged with a formal verdict of not guilty. They were freed at once, and left the court looking as if they expected death outside. To all the prisoners the affair must have been utterly incomprehensible and bewildering, and equally so to the witnesses, who were probably quite ready to name the murderers, and could not understand why, instead of all these apparently irrelevant questions, the one simple one was not put, "Who killed Jim Campbell?" and so have done with it.

The Counsel for the Crown now addressed the Jury, bidding them consider the next white men who went out bush in the neighbourhood of Junction Bay. What would happen to them if these blackfellows, convicted on the reliable evidence of their own kind, were let free? And he begged them to do their duty towards God and themselves by returning a verdict of guilty.

The Council for the Defence begged them to discount evidence which was obviously only camp-fire jabber, to remember how grossly cruel the dead man had been to the blacks of that country, and to do their duty towards God and themselves by returning a verdict of not guilty.

The Judge summed up, the Jury retired, and after an hour and a half returned with their verdict — five prisoners, Lamareebie, Terandillie, Whardith, Angudyea, Daoomba, guilty of murder; the remaining one, against whom there was no evidence, not guilty.

Some weeks later, a message from the mysterious South commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life, and so Jim Campbell's murderers are now in Fanny Bay, where, as one of their kind expressed it, they have "good fella bed, good fella tucker, good fella clothes, mark longa back allee same emu foot". Even with these luxuries they must often pine for the freedom of their own country and wonder dumbly how it came to pass that they are thus confined.

Who can blame them for what they did? Who can say they committed a crime in ridding themselves of this cruel intruder into their bush world, who acted towards them with deliberate brutality. Were they not justified in obeying their own moral laws, utterly ignorant as they were that any others existed? It is to be feared that only too often the savage black who commits an act of violence is simply avenging equal outrages done to his own race by the savage white.

APPENDIX C

PIDGIN ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions on how to speak Pidgin English are found, surprisingly, in an official report of a geological survey (*Reports resulting from explorations made by the Government Geologist and staff during 1905*. Adelaide:Government Printer 1906:20)

It is wonderful what keen sight they have, and how quickly they detect anything unusual on the horizon. We noticed this particularly in the Daly River, where they would sight alligators and other game on the bank and in the water where we could hardly see them when pointed out. Unlike the white man, they do not become excited when they see anything, but quietly point in the direction, and, if further explanation is necessary, mention in an almost inaudible tone, and in a matter of fact manner — "Alligator, him sit down". The term "sit down", corresponds to the adverb "there" in every case. In fact, though the words used are quite English, some of them are used in such different senses that it takes a little time before a new chum can converse with them or give them orders properly. One never says "now", or "at once", if telling them to do certain things: it is always "first time". To "bring", "get", or "fetch", is always "catchem". "No", "not", or "don't", must be expressed by "no more". For "hurry", one must say "quick fellow". For the general meanings of "preferable", "nicest", "best", &c., "more better", is used; "know" is "savee". In order to draw one's attention quietly, they make, in an undertone, a sound like "Tut, tut, tut".

A similar version of these instructions, with some additions was published in Gee (1926:21). Gee was a member of the geological expedition in 1905. It is not certain who was the author of the original instructions.

The natives don't get excited over it, but quietly point in the direction, and mutter, "Alligator; him sit down". The term "sit down" means "there" in every case; and, in fact, though the words used are quite English, some of them are put in such different senses that it takes a little time before a new chum can get the hang of them and talk understandably with his black brother. One never says "now" or "at once" if telling them to do anything right away,

it is always "first time" to "bring", "fetch", or "get", you say "catchum". "No", "not", or "don't" must be given as "no more". For "hurry", say "quick fellow". For the meanings of "preferable", "nicest", or "best", the term "more better" is the correct thing; also these useful words may be used as a command and denial, thus: Suppose your boy says "Might be I go shootum duck?" and you reply "More better you bin washum my trousers". Visions of sport would fade, and the boy would obediently tackle the washtub. "Know" is "savee". To call your attention to anything quietly they make a low clucking noise. "Shall I" or "may I" is represented by "might be".

APPENDIX D

'JOURNALISTIC' PIDGIN

These two examples of 'journalistic' pidgin come from some of the earliest issues of the first Darwin newspapers. Almost certainly the work of two separate non-Aboriginal writers, they were written in what purported to be the local Pidgin English. It could be presumed that it bore sufficient resemblance to the actual pidgin so that the readers were expected to recognise it for what it was.

Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 5 December 1873

Blackfellow's Yabber
To the Editor

Mister Paper — Last night me been readum you — you been talk — Billy Muck set down long a chair. Lord Tommy Noddy come on long a black fellow's wylie.

What for whitefellow been talk it like that — Billy Muck, Miranda been growl plenty.

Long time ago Mister Perrin been readum that one all same. Whitefellow call him gentleman. I think it no been take it money — he been gib it. Very good. Notherone white fellow no like it what for growl? Why for no go way. Billy Muck, Miranda no been like um that one growl — been think it that you call him Mister Paper no gentleman! All same puppy dog I think it.

You write um this one Mr Paper, I think it very good no more growl long a Lord Tommy Noddy.

All right me.

BILLY MUCK.

Palmerston, Dec. 3. 1873

Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 2 January 1874

The Natives
To the Editor

Mist — my father go up a tree 'long my country, to get 'em stick. Him fall down; very much hurt; foot very bad. Me, Duncan, him son, carry him longa camp, put stick on leg, but no get better.

You say now, Mister, that big corroborree Parliament give blackfellow plenty physic, plenty good things so now you make Doctor come 'long camp and see my father; then him get better, and me, Duncan, sit 'long printing paper, be what whitefellow call printer's berrowa. (sic)

Very good. Duncan

Palmerston, Jan. 2, 1874

APPENDIX E

EXTRACTS FROM BORROLLOOLA POLICE RECORDS

1. Source: Borrolloola Police Letter Books (NTA F275 Vols.1&2)

DATE	PERSON	DETAILS
Oct.18 1886	Donegan to Foelsche	Tracker 'Jack' threatens to return to his own country.
Oct.24 1886	Donegan to Foelsche	Requests reinforcements to deal with 'the most notorious horse and cattle stealers from the other colonies ...'
Jun.17 1887	Curtis to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding Chinese ownership of racehorse
Nov.25 1887	Donegan to Foelsche	'... a mob of blacks came into town and reported that there was a ship wrecked between the mouth of the McArthur and the Robinson and that the cargo was washed ashore and that the crew two men were drowned ...'
Jan.26 1888	Donegan to Foelsche	'... there is a Kanaka employed by Mr Costello's son on Lake Nash Station, Queensland border ...'
May 22 1888	Donegan to Foelsche	'... to successfully cope with the savage blacks of this district and I may say savage and lawless whites it will be necessary to immediately station here another Constable and a force of Trackers ...'
Sep.6 1888	Donegan to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding hire of Chinese man to build coffin.
Nov.24 1888	Smith to Foelsche	'... not only the blacks but some of the white population are ready to take life without compunction.'

Borrooloola Police Letter Books *continued* ...

DATE	PERSON	DETAILS
Nov.24 1888	Smith to Foelsche	'... during the day a Queensland boy came to the station and asked to be taken on as a tracker so I kept him and hope the course I adopted will meet with your approval. I call him 'Fred' and enclose procuration order ...'
Nov.24 1888	Smith to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding Chinese Cook
Feb.16 1889	Power to Foelsche	'Ex Tracker 'Jack' wishing to get back to his own country. I have followed your instructions in sending him home to Palmerston ...'
Mar.16 1889	Power to Foelsche	(Telegram) 'Can you arrange for M.C. South, Alice Springs send tracker Powell's Creek for Borrooloola. Can't get Queensland boy"
Jun.17 1889	Power to Foelsche	'... Tracker 'Fred' ran away from this station ... I got another tracker named 'Boney' on the Cresswell Creek ... I hope he will remain as he appears to be good boy, but this place is very close to his country.'
Jun.17 1889	Power to Foelsche	'After a good deal of trouble, I learned from the natives that Davis and his mate Clarke were murdered by the blacks somewhere on the head of the Robinson River'
Jun.20 1889	Power to Foelsche	'... the Police here are placed at a great disadvantage through not having a tracker who does not belong to the district. The boy Fred who recently ran away belonged to Newcastle Waters ... the Tracker I have at present belongs to a neighbouring tribe and is quite friendly with the natives here, talks their dialect ... I consider it positively unsafe to travel with him as he may at any time lead or entice the bush blacks to attack ... travelling with a boy who is to all intents and purposes one of themselves affords them opportunities which they would not have if the police had a boy who did not belong to this district ... I have to ask you to obtain the services of a blackboy for the Borrooloola police from Port Darwin side ...'
Aug.23 1889	Power to Foelsche	'I have now got a Queensland boy as Tracker and he is as good a boy as any I know of in the Territory but he has a lubra from whom I cannot separate him. Respectfully ask that rations be allowed for her.'
Aug.31 1889	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding Chinese carpenter.

Borroloola Police Letter Books *continued* ...

DATE	PERSON	DETAILS
Oct.13 1889	Foelsche to Power	(Telegram) By the SS Adelaide, 'Native Constable Tommy is sent for your station.. He is a very smart boy and if well treated may stay with you for years.'
Oct.18 1889	Power to M.C. Stott (Roper River Police Station)	'Ah Kee, a Chinaman who has lately arrived here from the Roper, reports the murder of a Cingalee by the natives about (?) miles this side of the Hodgson River ... Ah Kee reports meeting two natives near where the murder was committed ... These two natives spoke good English and one (the youngest) said he had been working for Mr. Lawrie of Palmerston and Mr. Armstrong of Burrundie.'
Dec.7 1889	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding spearing of cattle by Aborigines. Suggests visit of Protector and distribution of rations to keep Aborigines around town and under supervision. 'The only other effectual method known to me is the formation of a Native Police Force as in Queensland.'
Dec.9 1889	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding Tracker Tommy - said to be impudent and afraid of locals. Requests retention of 'Mickie' from Queensland.
Jul.29 1889	Tanner (station manager) to Borroloola Police	Letter describing attack by Aborigines '... two bucks first appeared at the kitchen, my cook, a Chinaman, and the only man at home was at the time engaged in the garden, but on seeing them repaired immediately to his kitchen to interview them.'
Jun.16 1890	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding trackers. 'Tommy' still on duty. 'Mickie' employed elsewhere.
May 1 1892	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding unreliability of trackers. Always running away.
Jul.11 1892	Power to Foelsche	'... an inquest was held on the 10th inst. by C.N. Nash Esq. J.P. on the body of an aborigine named Harry Sue Lee who was speared by some other aborigines in his camp near the house of Ah Phun, for whom he was working ...'
Nov.24 1892	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding prisoner who 'was charged by M.C. Stott with stealing clothing from him at the Roper. This boy was engaged by me and sent to M.C. Stott for duty at his station. He ran away and took with him from the Roper the articles he was charged with stealing ...'

Borrooloola Police Letter Books *continued* ...

DATE	PERSON	DETAILS
Nov.24 1892	Power to Foelsche	'... I do not intend taking on another Tracker until I can get a Queensland boy or one from the interior ...'
Nov.24 1892	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding contracting of Chinese man Ting Yook, to dig well at Police Station.
Jan.4 1893	Power to Foelsche	Correspondence regarding Chinese man named Harry . Sue Lee (see excerpt from July 11, 1892)
Mar.21 1893	Power to Foelsche	'I have the honor respectfully to inform you that I have been obliged to employ as Tracker a native of this district until such time as I may be able to obtain a boy from Barrow Creek or the North Queensland districts.'
Jun.19 1893	Power to Foelsche	'I have the honor to inform you that sixteen (16) Chinese arrived here from Pine Creek during last month, in search of employment ...'
Nov.30	Stott to Waters (Sub-Inspector of Police)	Completed register of half-castes.
Jan.1 1909	Stott to Waters	'... nearly every European in this District keeps Lubras for their immoral purposes and in most instances there is a considerable amount of jealousy ...'

2. Source: Northern Territory Police Journal, Borrooloola (NTA NTRS 268/1)

(Journals before March 1899 missing)

DATE	JOURNAL EXCERPT
May 3 1899	Mentions 'two lubras in employ of Go Sing'.
Nov.5 1899	Issue of Hawker's Licence for Ah Wing.
Mar.14 1900	'Lance Corporal Power and Trackers left for the Foelsche and Robinson Rivers to caution the Natives that there would be cattle on these Rivers this year from the Tablelands and that they (the Natives) must not kill or disturb them.'

Northern Territory Police Journal, Borroloola *continued* ...

DATE	JOURNAL EXCERPT
Mar.21 1900	'... saw and cautioned two parties of natives about the stocking of the Foelsche and Robinson Rivers with cattle from the Tablelands and advised them to caution other natives.'
Mar.2 1901	'Ah Lang reports the death of Ah Suie on the 28th ult.'
Dec.13 1901	'Ah Sum, Ah Cheoy and Ling Tie repairing and painting the station.'
May 4 1902	'Corporal Power visited camp of Chinese (13) en route for Queensland ...'
May 19 1902	'Party of 6 Chinese "on road" report one of their number 'Low Kum' missing.'
Jun.25. 1902	'... Corporal Power questioned the natives "Jack" and "Brumby" who acknowledge killing a beast with the assistance of Walker but that it belonged to C.J. Scrutton.'
Jun.26 1902	'... gave blankets and tobacco to Natives and fired a salute with the Rifles and lighted a bonfire in honor of the coronation of the King.'

NOTES

- ¹Human occupation dates based on data from the excavation of rock shelters near the East Alligator River, Western Arnhem Land (White 1971:145). A date of 23,000 years B.P. is not inconsistent with the so-called 'third wave' of population of Australia, the Carpentarians, whose arrival may well have coincided with extremely low sea levels around 20,000 years B.P. (Birdsell 1977:116).
- ²Although dialects of Kriol are spoken throughout the region as indicated, it is not being claimed that Kriol is the only language spoken.
- ³The passage is taken from *Stories for bi-lingual situations*, a set of readers with comprehension exercises produced for use in Kriol/English bilingual programs and published by the School of Australian Linguistics, Batchelor, N.T. The orthography differs slightly from that which is now generally accepted.
- ⁴Hudson's important research (1981) concerns a Western Australian dialect of Kriol spoken in the Fitzroy Valley. See Hudson 1983.
- ⁵Earlier termed Cape York Creole, it is now considered to be more accurately termed Torres Strait Creole (Rigsby 1984). Other terms are also in use such as Torres Strait Broken and Blaikman Tok (Shnukal 1984).
- ⁶Mühlhäusler (1976; 1983) on New Guinea Pidgin, Reinecke (1969) and Bickerton and Odo (1976) on Hawaiian English, Harrison (1972) and Ross and Moverley (1964) on Pitcairn-Norfolk, and now Shnukal's expanding work on Torres Strait Creole (1983).
- ⁷Thomason (1980) disputes the nature of the actual Chinook jargon.
- ⁸The etymology of the term *pidgin* has never been satisfactorily explained. The most commonly held opinion and the etymology advanced by the OED is that it originated in the Chinese Pidgin English pronunciation of the English word 'business'. Some writers such as Todd (1974:20) see phonetic difficulties in this etymology. Kleinecke (1959:271-272) suggests an alternative derivation from a South American Yayo term *pidian people* which has some plausibility on phonological, semantic and historical grounds. Among other plausible alternatives (Todd 1974:22) is the Hebrew *pidjom barter*, used to describe the language ('Pidjom-English') spoken by Jewish refugees in London (Hassert 1913:432 n.2). As Todd (1974:23) concludes we may never know and all of these terms may have contributed in separate times and places resulting in a multiple etymology.

- ⁹Hesseling actually referred to the origin of creoles. However, the distinction between pidgins and creoles was not then linguistically defined and Hesseling was in fact discussing the genesis of pidgins.
- ¹⁰William Greenfield's sophisticated defence (1830) of the Sranan ('Negro-English') New Testament has been recently discussed by Reinecke (1983). See also J. Harris (1985a) and J. Harris (1985b).
- ¹¹Hesseling published extensively on pidgins and creoles between 1897 and 1934. Reviews of his work are given in Meijer and Muysken (1977) and in Muysken and Meijer (1979), in their introduction to a selection of his writings which have been translated into English (Hesseling 1979).
- ¹²Schuchardt's work on pidgins and creoles spanned the years 1881-1914. An anthology of Schuchardt's writings was edited by Spitzer (1922) and there is a bibliography in Vennemann and Wilbur (1972). A valuable review in English is Meijer and Muysken (1977). English translations of some of his writings have been published in Schuchardt (1979, 1980).
- ¹³Words such as 'pidgin' and 'jargon' had not, when Bloomfield was writing been given precise definitions by linguists and were therefore used loosely. Modern generally accepted usages have been given on page 12.
- ¹⁴Although formally published in 1978, there were earlier unpublished versions of Naro's paper, read at various conferences in 1973, 1974 and 1975 (Naro 1978:314n). Koefoed (1979), for example, had access to the 1973 version and Bickerton (1977) to the 1975 version.
- ¹⁵To cite just one example, Hall (1966:xii) records the Italian tour guide's *Questo èssere molto bello pittura Michelangelo - This be very beautiful picture Michelangelo.*
- ¹⁶In fact, Whinnom is now going further back and seeking the origin of Sabir in Jewish trading Latin (1977:304).
- ¹⁷Although the linking of pidginisation and creolisation to normal language acquisition processes is a theory which has only received serious attention in the past decade, it must be acknowledged that Greenfield (1830) in his remarkably sophisticated defence of the Sranan ('Negro-English') New Testament, foreshadowed such a theory over 150 years ago.

The human mind is the same in every clime; and accordingly we find nearly the same process adopted in the formation of language in every country. The Negroes have been proved to be in no degree inferior to other nations in solidity of judgment, or fertility of imagination; and therefore it may be fairly presumed that they are capable of forming a language from the materials with which they are furnished, qualified for expressing with accuracy and precision the ideas presented to their mind. (Greenfield 1830:51)

- ¹⁸As part of the large-scale Non-Standard Hawaiian English Project, commenced in 1973, Bickerton (1974a:125) and his associates recorded a considerable amount of speech including several hundred hours of Hawaiian Pidgin English during 1973 and 1974 (Bickerton 1981:8).

- ¹⁹ Reviewing Bickerton (1981), Holm (1982), for example, claims that contrary to Bickerton, there is evidence to suggest that pidgins brought to Hawaii from such places as the Cape Verde Islands had already been influenced by an African substratum.
- ²⁰ 25 December 1955. The author was identified only as JW (Vitale 1980:52).
- ²¹ This concept is based on theories of the origin of West African creoles inherent in Valkoff (1966), Tonkin (1971) and Hancock (1972).
- ²² Some of the reviewers of Bickerton (1981) have been critical of his handling of data. Holm (1982), for example, claims that Bickerton's statement (1981: 72) that Hawaiian Creole English 'shares none of the substratum languages of the other creoles' can be demonstrated to be false, there being adequate evidence of the presence of Portuguese creole speakers at the time of its creation, whose languages had been influenced by an African substratum.
- ²³ Gilman's paper deals with language loss and he views vocabulary change as a mechanism of lexical loss rather than gain. For example, semantic extension usually results in the loss, in a technical, lexicostatistical sense, of a word with its original meaning. Hancock (1980:65) sees lexical progression as gain, particularly in the case of the expansion of a pidgin because the supposedly 'lost' word never existed in the pidgin although it may have existed in the target language or superstrate language which was pidginised.
- ²⁴ Spencer's original translation and spelling are retained.
- ²⁵ The writer acknowledges but does not here enter the long-standing controversy within Australian Aboriginal studies over the most appropriate terms for the various territorial units. Terms such as horde, patrilocal band, land-holding group and dialectal tribe have all had and continue to have their proponents. The term 'speech community' is not an appropriate term for a territorial unit when there are more suitable anthropological terms.
- ²⁶ Milliken's map is based on 1972 and earlier data and covers a significantly high proportion of all Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Milliken (1976:240) acknowledges some of the map's deficiencies. It does not, for example, map locations where the speakers of a given language comprised two per cent of the population or fewer nor does it include so-called 'foreign' Aboriginals in towns. In a map which endeavours to show language distribution, there is a remarkable example of the danger of a map becoming more important than reality. Milliken (1976:240) states that various locations were 'moved a little, the most important being Oenpelli which was moved approximately two and a half centimetres to the right to avoid overprinting' (!)
- ²⁷ It is widely accepted that the absence of the dingo in Tasmania means that it was introduced since the formation of Bass Strait (Mulvaney 1969:134), while a date as recent as 4,000 years ago for its introduction also places it since the formation of Torres Strait (Nix and Kalma 1972:86).
- ²⁸ Places mentioned in the discussion which follows are marked on Map 4.
- ²⁹ It is alleged that Ch'eng Ho believed he was at the South Pole. As Mulvaney (1969:32) observes, this must be Darwin's only link with polar exploration!

³⁰Part of Fitzgerald's argument was based on the information that the piece was made of highly valuable jade. Some of the force of his argument is lost now that it is known to be a rather undistinguished soapstone sculpture (Mulvaney 1969:32).

³¹The early European visits will be discussed in Chapter 5.

³²Various other spellings have been used, including *Baijini*, *Baiini* and *Bajini*.

³³Visits by Aboriginal people to such places did occur and will be discussed later in this Chapter (pp.92-96).

³⁴Some Aboriginal people believe that the *Bayini* stories are more consistent with a view that *Bayini* was one person, perhaps the leader of the group.

³⁵Malay: Barker 1829; Wilson 1835; Stokes 1846; Oppen 1864; Wildey 1974; Carrington 1886; Parsons 1907; Searcy 1909; Spencer 1914; Campbell 1917; White 1918; Lewis 1922; Jennison 1927; Warner 1932; Mountford 1956; Bauer 1964; Simmons 1970; Donovan 1981.
 Macassan: Earl 1841, 1842, 1846a, 1846b; R. and C. Berndt 1954; Worsley 1955; Elkin 1964; Bauer 1964; Mulvaney 1969; Capell 1970; Wurm 1972; Cole 1973, 1979; Macknight 1969a, 1972, 1976; Turner 1974; Lamilami 1974; Waterman and Waterman 1976; Read 1978; Dixon 1980.
 Bugis: Sweatman 1844; Howitt 1904; Grenfell Price 1930; Mulvaney 1966; Spillett 1972.

³⁶Indonesian: Capell 1965; Pilling 1970; McCarthy 1970; Maddock 1975.
 East Indian: Chaseling 1957.

³⁷The modern use of this term by Aboriginal people may be a recent development prompted by European usage. See pages 100-102.

³⁸Anthropological opinion is divided as to the extent to which 'Macassan' culture influenced Aboriginal culture.

³⁹As Mühlhäusler (1985:1) points out, the most frequently used formula is to name pidgins firstly after their locations and secondly after their major lexical source language. This formula would require the 'Macassan' Pidgin to be termed Australian Pidgin Macassan but such a label pretends to a precision which will be shown to be inaccurate and therefore misleading.

⁴⁰Published with revision in 1981.

⁴¹Writers who termed the language 'Malay' include Keppel (1853:157), Wildey (1876:135), White (1918:145), Jennison (1927:177), Ellis (1936:130), Capell (1970:249).

⁴²Among the writers who refer to the language as Macassan or Macassarese are Carrington (1886:65); Searcy (1905:10, 1909:36, 1912:197); Tindale (1925:130); Chaseling (1957:50); Warner (1969:475); Turner (1974:180). This language is now normally spelt 'Makassarese', but the traditional spelling will be retained in this study in the interests of uniformity with the various quotations under discussion.

⁴³See discussion on page 84.

⁴⁴Flinders (1814:229) stated that the praus he encountered all came from Macassar. As Macknight (1976:17) points out, all 34 praus that called at Raffles Bay gave Macassar as their port of departure and, at the end of the century, the South Australian government dealt with authorities in Macassar in matters relating to the control of the industry.

⁴⁵See pages 101-103 for a full discussion.

⁴⁶Collet Barker, commandant at Raffles Bay in 1828 and 1829, kept a detailed diary. The MS. is now held in the Mitchell Library in Sydney. See Chapter 5, pages 126 to 136.

⁴⁷See note 46 re Barker's diary.

⁴⁸Literature references to Aboriginal people travelling overseas with the trepangers include Earl (1846b:118); Tindale (1925:130); Warner (1932:481); Berndt and Berndt (1954:50-63); Worsley (1955:5); Chaseling (1957:53); Mulvaney (1966:454, 1969:26); Capell (1965:73); Macknight (1972:286, 1976:85); Lamilami (1974:70); Cole (1979:54); Urry and Walsh (1981:95).

⁴⁹See for example SAA 1374/1870/A1798.

⁵⁰This was, during this period, the Minister for Education.

⁵¹This will be discussed in more detail later. There was a tendency to use the term 'Macassar' in reference to most of the outside world (see pages 101 to 103).

⁵²This document now published in Macknight (1981).

⁵³Although Searcy's books (1905, 1909, 1912) purport to be reminiscences of his life as a customs officer, he appears to have taken a certain amount of liberty with some of the historical facts. Berndt and Berndt (1954:205, n.13) believe this to be particularly so in Searcy (1911). He is, however, cited here in support of general aspects of 'Macassan'/Aboriginal contact and in this area the writer believes his observations to be reliable.

⁵⁴The possibility of 'Macassan' activity in Cape York is acknowledged, but it is generally accepted that members of the trepanging fleet in Northern Territory waters did not work east of the Sir Edward Pellew Islands.

⁵⁵Tabak as a word for tobacco is unlikely in this instance to have been derived from English but from the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin.

⁵⁶Tindale (1925:132) recorded the term malaya on Groote Eylandt in 1922 and it seems to have been used in the following twenty years between Groote Eylandters and missionaries. Urry and Walsh (1979:20) note the use of the term Kardu Malayany in the Murinbata language (Port Keats).

⁵⁷Tindale (1925:132) transcribed the word as urubalanda and noted what he considered to be alternate forms orabaranda and orobanda.

⁵⁸It has been reported by Thomson (1949:90) that another widespread word for Europeans, munanga also referred originally to Macassans.

⁵⁹The use of terms derived from pataripang to denote the trepang-traders is not uncommon (see, for example, Walker and Zorc 1981:118). Tindale (1925:132) observed that the 'Macassans' were called 'Chudaka' by the Nunggubuyu people on the mainland opposite Groote Eylandt. This was no doubt derived from the term for 'trader' in the 'Portuguese-Malay' Pidgin. The Macassarese term is sudagara and the Malay is sudagar which, according to Cense (1979:725) derive ultimately from the Persian saudagar.

- ⁶⁰ Although Earl arrived in Port Essington on the *Alligator* on 26 October 1838, he spent much of his first year as an interpreter on various trading voyages into South-east Asia (Spillett 1972:19-37).
- ⁶¹ Although it in no way detracts from his observation that Aboriginal people did not pronounce words in the way they were pronounced in Macassarese, it is interesting to note that Earl Anglicises them. 'Macassar' differs just as markedly from Macassarese Mangkasara as 'Mungkajerra' does!
- ⁶² Reprinted in Earl (1853:223) with trusaan corrected to turutan.
- ⁶³ See page 85.
- ⁶⁴ See page 101.
- ⁶⁵ A number of languages known to have been influenced by this pidgin have short forms such as ga (Gumatj) and kwa (Anindilyakwa) which are informal imperatives with the general meanings of *come here* or *give here* and which could possibly have the same ultimate derivation as the words addressed to King.
- ⁶⁶ The officially stated British reasons are set out in Bathurst to Brisbane, 17 February 1824 (HRA, III [5]:758-760).
- ⁶⁷ See, for example, his correspondence with Under Secretary Horton (HRA, III [5]:737-741).
- ⁶⁸ See correspondence between Chairman of Committee and Earl Bathurst (HRA, III [6]:822-829).
- ⁶⁹ Bremer outlined the setting up of the settlement in his despatch to Earl Bathurst on 12 November 1824 (HRA, III [5]:781-790).
- ⁷⁰ Detailed regulations are given in the 'Regulations Respecting the Natives, and the Carrying of Fire Arms' (HRA, III [6]:676).
- ⁷¹ Stirling to Darling, 20 June 1827 (HRA, III [5]:815).
- ⁷² See Smyth's diary entries of 2 and 4 July 1827. This and all further references to the diaries of Smyth and Duncan refer to the extracts recorded in Wilson 1835:131-145.
- ⁷³ The two most prominent Aboriginal leaders were Mariac and Iacama (spellings as given in Wilson 1835:315). These two men were respectively nicknamed 'Wellington' and 'Waterloo'.
- ⁷⁴ See HRA, III [6]:781-789.
- ⁷⁵ See note 46 re Barker's diary.
- ⁷⁶ Rival's family remained satisfied, even anxious that she remain at Fort Wellington.
- ⁷⁷ Wilson alluded to this double standard in a more general sense in commenting on the theft of a small boat by the Aborigines. Without condoning the theft, he cited examples of what he called 'civilised delinquency' in which Aboriginal canoes were simply taken by whites who came across them. (Wilson 1835:146)
- ⁷⁸ Although it does not form part of this narrative, it seems incomplete not to record Barker's untimely death. He did not live to reach Sydney. He had been asked to perform some duties in Western and Southern Australia first. While surveying a site for a potential settlement at the mouth of the Murray

River, he was speared to death by Aborigines whose only experience of whites had been the depredations of the crews of sealing ships (Sturt 1834 [2]:239). As Powell (1982a:53) has noted, he was neither the first nor the last on either side of the struggle between black and white who died because he trusted and was vulnerable.

⁷⁹Wilson (1835:121) used the term 'white fellow' for Europeans. I am not certain that it was a term in use at Raffles Bay (see page 274).

⁸⁰Spencer (1914:46) outlined the social organisation of the Iwaidja as follows:

There are apparently three divisions, called respectively Munbulkitj, Manjerojelli and Manjerawuli, amongst whom the totemic groups are divided, very unequally, the first having four, the second two and third seven. Munbulkitj and Manjerojelli marry Manjerawuli people and vice versa, but members of the two former may not intermarry.

⁸¹Jaricari *cloth*. Makassarese carecare.

Dakul *axe*. Austronesian but probably not Makassarese, e.g. South Philippine pa-dakul *axe*.

La:ti *knife*. Makassarese lading.

⁸²In my original thesis, (Harris 1984b:161) I used the term Iwaidja to designate this language. Although I acknowledged it then to be only a label of convenience, I now prefer to avoid its use altogether in reference to the early 19th century. The historical distribution of language and land-holding groups on the Cobourg Peninsula is highly complex and poses many problems (Powell 1982b:91). Changes had been taking place before the era of British settlement (Earl 1846:242) and it should not automatically be presumed that there is direct historical continuity between the language spoken at Raffles Bay in the 1820s and the language known today as Iwaidja. I am indebted to Peter Spillett for suggesting to me the possibility, which he encountered in Sulawesi, that the term Iwaidja may mean *place of payment* and may have originally been a label applied by the 'Macassans' to those Aboriginal people who attached themselves to the customs station which was established at Port Essington later in the 19th century. There is some linguistic support for this possibility in that words closely related to Buginese *waja to pay* are known in other coastal languages (Walker and Zorc 1981:118) and the prefix *i-* (or *ri-*) can be used in Makassarese to mean *in* or *at* at the beginning of place names.

⁸³Earl's important contribution to understanding the nature of the 'Macassan' Pidgin has already been discussed in Chapter 4 (pages 103-106).

⁸⁴The most famous observation is probably that made by Collins (1798 [I]:544) at Sydney.

... nothing but a barbarous mixture of English with the Port Jackson dialect is spoken by either party; and it must be added, that even in this the natives have the advantage, comprehending, with much greater aptness than we can pretend to, everything they hear us say.

⁸⁵Corrected to Mountnorris in Leichhardt (1846b:238).

⁸⁶See Gipps Despatches 39 of 1840 (HRA, I [20]:837-844) and 203 of 1843 (HRA, I [23]:245-247).

- ⁸⁷Letter from Boyle Finniss to Sir Dominic Daly, 5 April 1865. Published in *South Australiana* 12 (March 1973).
- ⁸⁸Several years later, Miry, whose name has also been spelt Mira and Maira, reappeared in Darwin in a humane and conciliatory role. The incident is recounted in the next chapter.
- ⁸⁹SAPP, 80/1866:12.
- ⁹⁰SAPD, HA, 1868-1869:805.
- ⁹¹The town, as it was replacing its abortive predecessor at Escape Cliffs, was first named Palmerston. In this study it will be referred to by its subsequent name, Darwin.
- ⁹²Spelt Larrakeya in some older writings. There are a number of other variant spellings.
- ⁹³The culprits were never caught, perhaps not even known, but in the tension and confusion which followed, all Aboriginal people including Miry were under suspicion. Miry, however, appears to have been genuinely grieved and also asked to see the spearhead to try to identify the murderer (Kerr 1971:133).
- ⁹⁴Wildey (1876:132) spells their names Borrodaile and Pearmain. Kelsey (1975:31) spells them Permain and Borrowdale.
- ⁹⁵Lewis returned to Port Essington and built the homestead after the unsuccessful search party. Lewis himself gives the year as 1873. A photograph of the homestead is so labelled in Lewis (1922:156) and Wildey's account (1876:132) of the search party seems to tally as he was in Darwin in 1873, but he could have received the information after he left the Territory. Lewis does, however, place the search after the arrival of the first boatload of Chinese and in fact says that Dr Guy, who came with the Chinese from Singapore, accompanied the search party. Historians accept August 1874 as the arrival date of the first boatload of Chinese (Rendell 1952:49; Inglis 1967:22; Donovan 1981:106; Powell 1982a:96). There would seem to be official confirmation of this (Minister Controlling the N.T. Inward Mail, 5 August 1874). In Kelsey's memoirs, now published as Kelsey 1975, the date of departure of the search party is given as 11 October 1874 (Kelsey 1975:31).
- ⁹⁶For discussion of this date, see note 95.
- ⁹⁷Minister Controlling the N.T. Inward Mail 5 August 1874 (see Rendell 1952:49).
- ⁹⁸Data from Inglis 1967:21 and Donovan 1981:172.
- ⁹⁹It is not known in which category the few 'Malayans' and other non-European, non-Chinese were placed.
- ¹⁰⁰Northern Territory Incoming Correspondence, 399/1880.
- ¹⁰¹The Yam Creek gold field.
- ¹⁰²The most recent spellings and corrected place names as used in *The Times atlas of the world* (1980) are given in brackets. The older names are retained in this study in order to obviate confusion between text and quotation.

- ¹⁰³The relationship between Chinese Pidgin English and an earlier Portuguese pidgin is as yet unresolved (Reinecke et al 1975:540).
- ¹⁰⁴The use of Chinese Pidgin English has declined in the 20th century (Reinecke et al 1975:540) due largely to political and social disfavour (Hall 1944:95). Although it is usually said to be dying (Hancock 1971:521, 1977:378) or even extinct (Franklin 1979:41), it is apparently gaining a new lease of life in Taiwan (Whinnom 1971:n13).
- ¹⁰⁵SAA 790:410, 31 July 1879
- ¹⁰⁶N.T. Report 1912. Sub-Report by Aborigines' Department. See also Brandl, Haritos and Walsh (1979:80, 95-96).
- ¹⁰⁷The iron tools which Leichhardt observed Roper River people to have in 1845 were almost certainly obtained directly or indirectly from the 'Macassans' and not, as Morphy and Morphy (1981:4) suggest, by exchange with Aboriginal people in contact with Europeans.
- ¹⁰⁸The total non-Aboriginal population of the whole Northern Territory immediately prior to the Overland Telegraph construction era was 201 (see Table 5 page 172).
- ¹⁰⁹Patterson's diary for 30 October 1871 to 27 January 1872 is held in the South Australian Archives, Adelaide.
- ¹¹⁰Mostly from eating the poisonous *Gastrolobium Grandiflora* (Bauer 1964:105).
- ¹¹¹Also *South Australian Register* 30 January 1873; 9 August 1873.
- ¹¹²Quotation from reprint of article in the *Queenslander* 13 June 1868.
- ¹¹³All these researchers used some primary sources. The most reliable of them is probably Duncan (1967).
- ¹¹⁴In 1884/5, Henry Rogers took out the lease on land which approximately coincides with the present-day Urapunga Station (SAA 790:1884:547).
- ¹¹⁵See, for example, *Government Resident's Report on the Northern Territory* for the year 1890.
- ¹¹⁶This argument will be detailed later in this chapter, where the whole issue of reprisal, massacre and the suppression of information will be fully discussed.
- ¹¹⁷A near-slavery situation, for example, existed in the north of Western Australia late last century (see Markus 1974:34-56) and such conditions may have been more widespread.
- ¹¹⁸The quotation comes from Crawford's comments on Willshire's book, appended to the book itself (Willshire 1896:101).
- ¹¹⁹See also Stanner (1969), Reynolds (1972), Robinson and York (1977) and Loos (1982).
- ¹²⁰George Conway, now deceased, came to the Northern Territory in 1901 and after working for Eastern and Pacific, at different times took up Urapunga (1907), Maryfield (1910) and Roper Valley Stations (Merlan 1978:81,n.29).
- ¹²¹In sustained narrative, Dinah Garadji adopted a standard English target interlanguage. The quotation is the writer's translation but the original is available on request.

- ¹²²Giles produced a lengthy 'Report of a tour of inspection of Roper River District'. A photocopy of the typescript report is held in the Library of Darwin Community College in a bound volume of papers dealing with Roper River entitled *Roper all about*, compiled by Kathleen Haigh. Page numbers in references are for that volume.
- ¹²³These nine languages are not merely dialects but distinct languages, many of them members of different language families.
- ¹²⁴The inadequacy of the concept of the dialectal tribe was noted in Chapter 4, pages 70-73 and note 25.
- ¹²⁵Ngukurr itself is generally said to be in Yukul country although opinion is divided, even among Aboriginal people, as to what Yukul actually is. It is said by some Ngukurr people that it was an 'association' of the various tribes living along the Roper River itself. Others say it was a language 'in between' Mara and Wandarang. If so, it is now extinct. Dinah Garadji told the author (16 November 1983) that before the Europeans came, 'they already had their own Kriol', the Yukul language.
- ¹²⁶Although Black (1983:21) lists Ngandi as extinct, Heath found six speakers in 1978 (p.3). Possibly only one of these has since died (J. Sandefur, personal communication).
- ¹²⁷Bishop Frodsham's comments are recorded in the Annual Report of the Church Mission Association of Victoria (1907:5).
- ¹²⁸Before the Federation of Australian States, in 1901, there were separate Anglican Church Mission Associations in the Colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. After Federation, an Australian association was eventually formed in 1916, renamed the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of Australia (see Cole 1971).
- ¹²⁹The Roper River Mission at Mirlinbarrwarr was completely destroyed by a flood in 1940 after which it was moved five miles upstream to the present site at Ngukurr. References to the mission institution itself in this study will not distinguish between sites.
- ¹³⁰Barnabas Roberts spoke to John Sandefur (1979:13).
- ¹³¹See note 121.
- ¹³²As Thiele (1982) so clearly shows, this ambition was never achieved during the years of Mission control, nor has it been achieved since, during the more recent years of Aboriginal control.
- ¹³³*Annual Report, Church Mission Association of Victoria* for 1909, p.8.
- ¹³⁴Goyder's diary of the first few months of the survey of Darwin prior to settlement. First reference to tum tum is on 29 April.
- ¹³⁵The ultimate derivation of savvy from Romance sapere has been fully discussed in Hall (1957). Piccaninny can be shown to have a similar derivation, via perhaps Portuguese pequeno (Todd 1974:15).
- ¹³⁶Rather than attempting a misleading uniform orthography, the authors' original spellings are retained in all pidgin examples.
- ¹³⁷With increases in fictional and non-fictional accounts of Northern Territory life between 1910 and 1950, there is a great deal of recorded speech available after 1910. This data needs to be studied but is outside the time-scale with which this study deals.

- ¹³⁸ The only exceptions are the few examples of journalistic pidgin speech recorded in the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (see Appendix D).
- ¹³⁹ This does not preclude the possibility that a feature may have been in use and not recorded, nor the possibility that further records may be discovered.
- ¹⁴⁰ Very good and no good are typical of the South Seas Jargon and of many Australian pidgins and modern creoles. Clark, although noting this, hesitates to use them as comparative features because they are not strictly innovative with respect to English, even though they have non-standard idiomatic features.
- ¹⁴¹ The behavioural differences are related to differing perceptions of what a name is. To many Europeans, names are little more than labels by which people wish to be known whereas to Aboriginal people, a name is not readily divulged as to know people's names is to have the potential to control them.
- ¹⁴² The handwritten journal pages are unnumbered. This quotation appears on the 7th page of the section dealing with tropical Australia. The word piccaninny has been overwritten, but the opinion of archivists supports the writer's contention that there is no doubt that it is piccaninny.
- ¹⁴³ In the short manuscript by May (1872) concerning life on the gold fields, there are indications of verbal communication with Aboriginal people but no recorded speech except for a reference to the term piccaninny.

One of their number came up and asked for flour. I thought if I gave them some they would go away ... they were soon back again and wanted more for piccaninny ... (May 1872:16)

So, like the reference to the same word in Sibbald (1843), it is clearly a term which was in use. The comments on piccaninny earlier in this section apply equally in this instance.

- ¹⁴⁴ For example, Tharran olmen weya imin go imin dalim me.
The man who went told me.

- ¹⁴⁵ There is one paragraph where Spencer (1928:591) records a Borroloola Aboriginal man, in court evidence, referring to two people in ways which could be taken to be early evidence of fellow (2) and youme.

Two fellow been go self longa crossing.
 Then two fellow walk.

There is not sufficient evidence of pronominal use of fellow (2) but the above examples certainly suggest a movement towards that kind of usage. Similarly, with regard to youme, the one recorded possible example is not unarguably a definite dual pronoun form.

Him say you and me go longa Price potato.
 (Spencer 1928:591)

It is clear, however, that from such phrases the modern dual pronoun forms developed. There is an example in Masson (1915:175) which is even more suggestive of a dual pronoun but this raises the additional problem of how to interpret speech which occurs after creolisation at Roper River and potentially influenced by it. (The Kriol dual pronoun is yunmi.)

You'n me go killem that one cheeky fella ...

- ¹⁴⁶ Stop is found with an existential meaning in the Fitzroy Valley dialect of Kriol in Western Australia (Hudson 1983:102) but not in the Northern Territory.
- ¹⁴⁷ He is found as a predicate marker in the Fitzroy Valley dialect of Kriol in Western Australia (Hudson 1983:48), but not in the Northern Territory.
- ¹⁴⁸ Although it does not affect this generalisation, Rudder (1983) appears to use the term 'animal' inconsistently. Whereas contrasts such as 'animals and plants' (146) are the accepted scientific usage and even distinguishing humans and animals may be acceptable (144), contrasting animals with marine vertebrates (143) and with birds and fish (143) is inconsistent with formal scientific usage. Rudder (161), when he defines warrakan as including most 'animals, birds and reptiles', surely means *mammals*, birds and reptiles.
- ¹⁴⁹ The informant for this information was Pigeon Rankin of Barunga.
- ¹⁵⁰ The writer has elsewhere reported semantic interference between English and Aboriginal taxonomic categories in the teaching of the English word 'bird' in a school in a Kriol-speaking community (J. Harris 1978).
- ¹⁵¹ The discrepancy in dates for Sharpe is due to the fact that different sources have been quoted by different authors for the same paper, Sharpe (1974) having been republished in 1975.
- ¹⁵² It was, however, discovered that among Kriol-speaking people living in Darwin, some younger people recognised the word *kaikai*. There is a significant community in Darwin of ex-Queensland people of Pacific Island descent and it was from these people that some Kriol speakers had heard the word *kaikai*. There is a special register in use among those people in Darwin who are of mixed ancestry and who refer to themselves as 'coloured'. Their ancestry is mainly Aboriginal, European, Pacific Islander, and Chinese. They speak standard English for most communication, particularly outside the group, but retain a special register of words for intimacy, privacy, or joking purposes within the group, and *kaikai* is one of those words. Some Kriol-speaking students at Kormilda College recognised *kaikai* because they were on friendly terms with some people of Pacific Island descent employed at the College and had heard *kaikai* in informal and joking contexts.
- ¹⁵³ James Noble was later ordained to the Anglican ministry, becoming the first Aboriginal priest. A short biography has been published (Higgins 1981).
- ¹⁵⁴ Benjy, bogey and cobra are particularly significant because they did not enter Standard Australian English. There are other words in Northern Territory Pidgin English which were also clearly of Southeastern Australian Aboriginal origin but they have less comparative value because they entered Standard Australian English e.g. *myall* (Gunn 1908:94), *corroboree* (Gunn 1905:24).
- ¹⁵⁵ There are other words from the Southeastern Australian Pidgin which are found in modern Kriol and which almost certainly formed part of Northern Territory Pidgin English. They cannot strictly form part of the present discussion because no record has yet been found of their use prior to 1910. For example, *gula angry* derived originally from the New South Wales word *kulara*, it is reported from various places including Georges River (Ridley 1875:106) and Botany Bay (Meston (1896) in Baker 1966:314).

Yarraman *horse* reported widely in New South Wales, it is accorded various etymologies including *yera teeth* and *man with* (Ridley 1875:21) and *yarra fast* or *yanan mane* (Morris 1898:523). The possibility that yarraman may have preceded European invasion and be ultimately Austronesian should not be ignored, cf. Makassarese *jarang*; Javanese *jaran* (Walker and Zorc 1981:121).

¹⁵⁶ Whitefellow has been replaced by *gardiya* in the Kimberleys and by *mandiji* or *bapalanji* on the Barkly Tablelands.

¹⁵⁷ As Sandefur (1979:116) notes, -it is found in a transitive sense in the Kriol of some speakers as an alternative to -im (e.g. *imin duim/imin duit he did it*). This is more likely the influence of present-day English usage, rather than the retention of an old form.

¹⁵⁸ Thonemann (1949:5) claims that his book is, in reality, Buludja's autobiography and that he changed 'pidgin English' into 'standard English' for the benefit of the readers. It is evident, however, that Thonemann went far beyond mere translation and it is not always easy to tell which words are Buludja's and which are in reality his.

¹⁵⁹ Bungawah, in various forms, was a widespread word in Northern Territory coastal languages, derived from a Macassan term for leader.

¹⁶⁰ Parkhouse's informant also suggested that 'whitefellow no savee'!

¹⁶¹ By contrast, there are only two generations of primary language Kriol speakers at Barunga where the period of language disruption was a consequence of World War II. See discussion on pages 315-317.

¹⁶² The growing body of literature on Kriol includes Sharpe and Sandefur 1976; Sandefur 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1984a, 1984b; Sandefur and Sandefur 1979a; Harris and Sandefur 1983, 1984, 1985; Sandefur and Harris in press.

¹⁶³ These are, like this study, concerned with the original eastern or Roper River dialect of Kriol. The western or Kimberley dialect has been described by Hudson (1981, 1983).

¹⁶⁴ Some of the pidgin items which are not found in Kriol are only found in the earlier pidgin, and they had apparently dropped out of usage by the time that Northern Territory Pidgin English had stabilised at the turn of the century. One such example is the replacement of *tumble down* by *kill*. The only clear example of the loss of a lexically significant item present in the stable Northern Territory Pidgin English is the loss of *yabber* in favour of *talk*.

¹⁶⁵ As Bruce Rigsby (personal communication) points out, *jugabeg* is found elsewhere in Australia and the innovation may therefore predate Kriol.

¹⁶⁶ Although lexically derived from 'put' and 'him' the spelling *budum* is used in modern Kriol rather than *budim*, in accordance with the established principle of Kriol orthography whereby the spelling acknowledges that the high back vowel in *bud-* pulls the suffix vowel towards it (Sandefur 1984:79).

¹⁶⁷ The records show the use of more than one form such as *me* or *I* for 1st person singular and *allabout* or *they* for 3rd person plural. It is not certain whether this indicates variation or a situation in which the lexicon had not yet stabilised or whether perhaps it is the inaccuracy of the recorded speech. Gunn even has alternate forms in the one phrase.

Missus. Me sickfellow, I think.
(Gunn 1905:105)

This also raises the unresolved question of modern mi/ai variation (see note 168).

- ¹⁶⁸ Ai is also found sometimes. It is probably not the case that 'me' and 'I' survived as alternatives from Northern Territory Pidgin English but that ai is used by those whose Kriol usage exhibits a higher degree of recent English influence.
- ¹⁶⁹ As shown in Chapter 10, there are hints in Northern Territory Pidgin English in the 1900s that attempts were sometimes made to use a dual number in certain constructions.
- ¹⁷⁰ Inclusive we = you and I. (present company)
Exclusive we = other(s) and I. (other(s) not present)
- ¹⁷¹ Langford-Smith's statement is in a personal letter to John Sandefur in 1979.
- ¹⁷² It is true that by the time Langford-Smith was at the mission, the pidgin had been undergoing creolisation. This does not mean, however, that the missionaries spoke Kriol. The language used between missionaries and Aborigines will continue to be referred to as a pidgin for the purpose of this discussion.
- ¹⁷³ See, for example, Bett Bett's confident control of Pidgin English at Elsey Station in 1902 (Gunn 1905).
- ¹⁷⁴ This is the most likely explanation of what is happening today at Numbulwar. Essentially a Nunggubuyu-speaking community, Numbulwar has been the centre of Nunggubuyu linguistic research and a bilingual (Nunggubuyu/English) program was commenced in the school. Many of the Nunggubuyu families who are traditional owners of Numbulwar lived at Ngukurr and were Kriol speakers. During the last decade, these families have returned to Numbulwar, largely for political reasons, particularly the perceived necessity to demonstrate continuity of residence under the terms of the Land Rights Act. The children at Numbulwar from Nunggubuyu-speaking families now speak Kriol among themselves and Nunggubuyu at home. In fact, Kriol usage has gone a step further such that many younger children speak Kriol at home although their parents respond in Nunggubuyu. It must be emphasised, however, that this use of Kriol is a language shift, the adoption of one existing language at the expense of another. It is not a process of creolisation.
- ¹⁷⁵ Although Anindilyakwa may have been the dominant language, it is not being argued that the Groote Eylandt speech community was homogeneous. There were, for example, Nunggubuyu-speaking families on Groote Eylandt whose children were boarded in dormitories with children from Anindilyakwa-speaking families. If, however, they were not already bilingual, they were simply obliged to learn the language of the majority.
- ¹⁷⁶ The mission is said by some to be on Yukul land but as noted in note 125, it is uncertain whether Yukul was in fact the name of a land-owning entity. In any case, the hypothetical argument above is valid irrespective of the fine details of the actual siting of the Old Mission.
- ¹⁷⁷ General Policy and Methods of the Church Missionary Society of Australia and Tasmania, Missions to Australian Aborigines, Federal Council, May 1944 (Section IV, point 2).

¹⁷⁸ It is not being argued that the presence of a mission at places like Groote Eylandt or Oenpelli has had absolutely no sociolinguistic significance and therefore no linguistic effects. At the very least it hastened and facilitated the acquisition of English and provided many new lexical items in the local languages. If, however, today at Oenpelli there is an observable shift from Gunwinggu to English or to a non-standard form of English, this is due to the sudden and unavoidable presence of a large white mining town and the involvement of the local community in the related political, industrial and commercial activities. The effect of this presence on the community in all sorts of ways will be far greater than the mission could ever have been.

¹⁷⁹ In the modern situation, there is a wide range of usage and competence. There are first language Kriol speakers who speak Kriol with total fluency. There are other-language speakers who speak Kriol fluently as a second language, and there are multilingual people who speak Kriol adequately as a third, fourth, or nth language. There are also some Aborigines, notably those who have not acquired English, who speak a pidgin to Europeans. This applies particularly in Central Australia and some other places relatively remote from Kriol-speaking communities where traditional languages are strong. In some European/Aboriginal communications, it is not easy to define what language is being spoken, particularly by the Europeans, who are often speaking an elementary, foreigner's version of Kriol. Very few Europeans speak Kriol but many persist in the belief that they do speak it, due to the tolerance and intelligence of the Aboriginal people who accept what they say. What they speak could perhaps be described as an interlanguage.

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